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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the importance of helping children develop coping skills to deal with daily separations and more serious losses, this handbook provides basic information and classroom support strategies for teachers and caregivers to use responsively with preschoolers. Parts 1 through 3 of the handbook provide a rationale for responding to the emotional needs of children dealing with losses; discuss how to use the handbook, including the use of older adults as an important resource; and present Mahler's theoretical account of the impact of separation and loss on identity. Parts 4 and 5 contain a staff development training module and parent information. Part 6, the bulk of the handbook, is comprised of 31 classroom chapters, each addressing a specific type of loss. These chapters are divided into four units, each representing categories of loss experiences: (1) developmental losses, such as loss of transition objects, substitute teachers, and toileting accidents; (2) life experience losses, such as bodily injury, a pet's death, and moving; (3) traumatic loss, including hospitalization, news reports of a disaster, and parental separation or divorce; and (4) catastrophic loss, specifically death of a family member or loss due to fire. Each chapter also contains information about typical feelings and behavioral responses, tips for communicating with parents, phrases and ideas which can be incorporated into normal classroom routines, classroom activities addressing the specific issues raised by the loss experience either directly through pretend play or indirectly by focusing on underlying issues, and lists of relevant children's books. Contains 54 references. (KB)

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SEPARATION AND LOSS

A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals

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GENERATIONS TOGETHER

Generations Together is a unit within the University Center of Social and Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh, dedicated to creating intergenerational experiences that bring the young and elderly together to promote mutual growth and understanding. One important branch of Generations Together is the Intergenerational Early Childhood Program (IECP).

Over the past six years the IECP has developed state-wide and national programs designed to bring older adults together with preschool children. In Pennsylvania, IECP activities have prompted the formation of intergenerational networks as well as direct-service programs. During these projects, the issue of "separation and loss" emerged as a primary concern of early childhood professionals in these times of social stress and dislocation.

Generations Together was uniquely positioned to address this issue, because of its intergenerational focus, and because of the agency's existing Pennsylvania networks. During 1989-1991, IECP partnered with child care and aging network professionals from Harrisburg, Central Pennsylvania, Washington County, Mercer County and the Mon Valley. These professionals collaborated with Generations Together in conceptualizing a resource piece that would be of real value to teachers helping children and their families cope with separation and loss.

Thus, with funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, *Separation and Loss: A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals* was developed. Based on what experts understand about loss in the lives of children, the handbook serves as a reactive document, combining theoretical information with specific concrete suggestions for supporting children during a loss crisis. Older adults are recognized as an important natural resource to children, parents, and teachers, and their unique contributions are described and encouraged throughout the handbook.

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Side by Side
South Campus Child Development Center
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SEPARATION AND LOSS

A HANDBOOK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS

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I RATIONALE

The Needs of Children and Caregivers

When we think of losses, we tend to think of the traumatic or catastrophic losses associated with losing a loved one or suffering the consequences of fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, or other natural disasters. Yet losses occur every day as we move ahead with our lives, giving up "lost hours" that can never be replaced. The way we learn to handle the day-to-day losses influences the way we handle more serious losses. It's much the same with children. For children, whose daily separations from parents are still traumatic, a more serious loss such as the divorce or separation of those parents can have devastating results. Similarly, experiencing an event such as the loss of one's home or possessions through floods or tornadoes can elicit old concerns in a child about the availability of parents, and about their parents' ability to keep them safe.

Children are constantly confronted with loss — from the everyday, normal losses of losing a tooth, or outgrowing a favorite dress, to the all too common loss of a parent through separation and divorce, incarceration, military duty, hospitalization, or even death. It is often the teacher's role to help support the child during the period of grief and mourning that follows. And far too often, teachers have not been well-prepared to take on this responsibility. Recently, when a parent arrived at a child care program with child in hand and said to the teacher, "Jason's dad was killed in a car accident over the weekend and I haven't been able to tell him. Will you please tell him?", the teacher was placed under a great deal of pressure, in a position that few have really considered.

What do teachers say to parents and children in such situations? And even more, how can teachers continue to support children through the various stages of grief, knowing full well that coming to terms with the death of a parent can take months, even years? Parents and teachers report that children who experienced a series of tornadoes as preschoolers, more than six years ago, still show symptoms that the event left its mark (these children are now well into the school age years, and on the surface at least, appear to have forgotten the incident). For instance, one parent reported that her son becomes very anxious whenever the wind begins to pick up just before a thunderstorm. Another parent reported that her daughters "choose" to play in the basement family room even during a fairly mild storm. One child remarked to a teacher that he just can't enjoy helium balloons anymore, saying "I don't know why, but I just feel like the wind will pull it away."

Older Adults: A Special Resource

Times of loss, however, can provide significant opportunities for growth if enough support and guidance is available. An often-overlooked source of such support for children, parents and staff members is an older adult.

Of course, it is impossible to generalize about older adults regarding their appropriateness for work with young children. Many older adults are simply not interested in such work, for a variety of reasons. It is also true that some older adults who do seek contact with young children are not emotionally suited for it, according to early childhood professional standards. The section that follows is intended to refer to those older adults who have successfully negotiated their own adult developmental crises, who are capable of genuine nurturing, and who have a sincere desire to share with younger generations the perspective they have developed.

Older adults display a variety of important qualities that can ease the trauma and pain of those who are affected by loss and separation. They may have experienced loss in many forms: loss of a mate, loss of a child, loss of friend, loss of home, loss of income, loss of a job, loss of work identity, and perhaps many others. An older adult, who has survived these losses and who has helped others through times of distress, can be an excellent resource for someone who is undergoing a similar experience for the first time.

In many cases, time teaches the value of love. Having suffered and survived loss, older adults know how to extend warmth, caring and patience, in many different ways, to persons of many different ages. To a small child, a nurturing older adult may contradict the feeling that "nobody cares" during a time when the child's primary caregiver may be physically or emotionally unavailable. With the help of an older adult in this time of change, the child can continue to grow, develop, and hope for a brighter future.

Older adults can support children by giving them a chance to talk about their experiences and feelings in a free and open atmosphere. Children's understanding of their own emotions, and their ability to feel good about themselves, are both enhanced by the presence in their lives of older caring adults.

Children's feelings of self-worth impact every aspect of their lives. Children who feel good about themselves are better at establishing relationships and developing skills and talents; they are more willing to reach out, to explore, to try. Unconditional acceptance is a major factor in the development of self-esteem, and older adults seem to be able to provide this. Many seniors discover untapped reservoirs of affection and attention as they age, enabling them to express an unambivalent investment in individual children, not because of "what the child can do," but because of who the child is.

This talent arises out of older adults' ability to separate their own egos from the achievements and failures of the children in their lives. In general, older adults are more tolerant of the minor mistakes children make. They tend to possess a natural unhurried patience, and automatically work at a slower pace that suits the needs of young children quite well. Somehow, too, the aging process often includes the development of a

tolerant, accepting attitude towards members of younger generations.

Older adults can also support children by helping them perform certain activities which provide opportunities to express concerns, clarify concepts, and confront fantasies about their experiences and feelings. They've seen the beginnings and endings of seasons, plants, animals, and people. They've become gentle concerning endings and can transmit their gentleness and understanding to others. They know what it feels like to lose or win, and understand that excelling in competition does not always mean success, that everyone has something at which they can excel by working to perfect their unique talents.

Older adults can also help to create an atmosphere of certainty and continuity for children of separated or divorced parents, assuring them that parents never stop loving or caring for their children even if they no longer live together. Many experiences have taught older adults the value of reason, and of the ability to adjust to new situations. They also realize that this is not true of young children, and act appropriately towards children who do not have a good concept of time, or whose immaturity does not always allow them to reason accurately. Older adults can be clear and honest with children as they interpret the misconceptions and mysteries of life.

An older adult's life experience can broaden children's understanding of the way the world works. Young children feel more comfortable with change in general if they are in contact with people of all ages who are enjoying and engaging in productive activities. Direct experience with older adults also gives children a clearer sense of how they and others fit into the world. A fundamental perception of the life cycle develops, and children experience first-hand the cycle of caring: parents care for young children, children care for aging parents, children grow up and have children of their own. Children who are encouraged to develop relationships with older adults learn first-hand about physical handicaps, illness, and death; they learn about life.

In addition, an experienced older adult can be a strong source of comfort and support to young or inexperienced parents. Through gentle guidance and openly expressed concern, older adults can help parents feel less alone. Similarly, a teacher or caregiver's anxieties about supporting children and parents can be alleviated by the presence of an older adult. Younger adults can benefit from someone whose life experience and perspective yields calmness, flexible stability, and the sense that "this, too, will pass." Older adults model behavior that is less impulsive, and share their ability to make careful, sensible judgments in a crisis.

An older adult's sincere interest and warm investment in young human beings springs from their desire to seize the opportunity for a second chance. They are eager to put

to use all that they learned (often through mistakes they made) the first time around, and to provide the kind of support they now understand to be truly valuable.

II USING THE HANDBOOK

If you have taken this handbook off the shelf intending to use it, we already know something about you. We know, for example, that you are likely to be a concerned child caregiver with a professional attitude towards the work you have chosen. We suppose, too, that you are currently working with a child who is having, as caregivers often put it, "a very hard time." You strongly suspect that this child's difficulty is related to a specific incident, some developmental or life experience crisis that has overwhelmed his or her ability to cope. The child's behavior, as a result, may be threatening to overwhelm *your* ability to cope.

This handbook's unique combination of basic information and straightforward hands-on support strategies will provide the guidance you need to help you focus your efforts (and those of your co-workers, and of the child's parents) on helping the child recover his or her balance.

The Chapters

At the heart of this reference volume are the classroom chapters, each of which addresses a specific incident. Some of these incidents are almost certain to take place in the life of a child; others are less common, but serious enough to warrant careful attention if they do occur. The activities in these chapters are not designed to be added at random to a preschool classroom curriculum. They are, rather, responsive to the judgment of a teacher or caregiver who determines that a particular child is struggling with a difficult issue and deserves some special concern.

For example, most preschool children show no unusual distress when they come in with a new haircut. If, however, there is a child in your classroom who seems to be having a hard time with it, you could pull out this handbook, look up the chapter entitled "Haircut," and get some ideas about what is going on. Equally important, you will also find ways to be directly supportive and helpful to the child in question.

There are 31 such chapters contained in the handbook, each useful in addressing a specific classroom situation. The chapters are divided into four units, representing categories of loss experiences: developmental losses, life experience losses, traumatic losses, and catastrophic losses (these categories are discussed more fully in Section III of the handbook, "The Meaning of Separation and Loss Experiences.") The units are arranged in order of severity and significance, although these characterizations probably best describe adult perceptions. It's important to remember that even routine developmental loss can seem traumatic to a child who has had to handle one too many losses, or to a child who is still struggling with the primary loss, that of losing the total availability of his mother.

Each chapter contains information about typical feelings and behavior, tips for communicating with parents, and phrases and ideas which can be built into your normal classroom routine. At the end of each unit you will find lists of relevant children's books.

You will also find in each chapter some classroom *activities* designed to address the specific issues raised by a particular loss experience. The underlying assumption here, well-accepted by child development specialists, is that symbolic play and art are important to the developing child. Concrete play experiences which mirror their own struggles can provide a non-threatening way for children to explore and manage those issues. The classroom activities in each chapter will give children opportunities for manipulating, making and doing, enabling them to better understand and express their perceptions of abstract concepts. They can also help children to recognize their own abilities, as they successfully complete the tasks.

Children deserve the opportunity to talk and play about issues that trouble or frighten them, or events which they do not completely understand. If they are not able to make emotional or cognitive sense of an experience, it remains an open issue for them, to which they will return time after time. This re-working distracts children, taking precious energy from learning and developmental progression.

In this handbook, there are two basic types of activities. Some address the issues underlying the child's experience in a direct, literal fashion; in the chapter on "Moving," for example, moving vans and suitcases figure prominently in several of the recommended strategies.

In other cases, the activities relate to the basic issues in less obvious ways. The chapter entitled "Joint Custody" contains an activity that involves a toy car rolling into and out of a cardboard tube. Although not a direct representation of a joint custody situation, the activity gives the child a sense of control over "comings and goings" that he may lack in the real world. Similarly, activities in the "Competition" chapter bypass the question of winning and losing, and concentrate directly on the real issue: the child's development of a positive self-image.

The implementation of large projects such as the "moving van" activity from "Moving," or the pet show from "The Death of a Pet," will be enhanced by the participation of older adults, as primary facilitators or as helpers. It is also wonderfully appropriate to use an older adult as the presenter in a quiet, one-on-one activity such as the timeline project described in "A New Baby in the Family."

The availability of older adult participation may itself suggest variations in the

activities. For example, in the chapter entitled "Haircut," input from an older adult would be marvelously enriching. He or she, still going through significant changes in physical appearance, has accepted the fact that change is a natural part of life. By bringing in childhood and adult pictures of themselves (showing a variety of hairstyles), older adults could demonstrate that physical change need not negatively affect one's self-image, or what other people may think. Older adults intuitively understand that change can sometimes indicate growth.

We present a wide variety of activities, and you will be able to choose those which you and your older adult resource person find most comfortable. You are also welcome — even encouraged — to use these ideas as starting points for your own creative, individually-tailored support activities. The most important factor is your energetic involvement with a concrete strategy of support for the child who seems to be struggling.

The chapters are arranged alphabetically within each unit, since it is difficult to assign any priority or developmental sequence to life experiences which affect each individual child so uniquely. In writing these chapters, the authors have chosen for aesthetic reasons to avoid grammatically clumsy third-person references such as "he or she" and "his/hers." In all cases, teachers and caregivers are referred to as feminine (lamentable though it may be, the vast majority of early childhood practitioners are women). To provide gender balance, the children in half of the chapters are assumed to be boys. These decisions were made randomly and arbitrarily, and are in no way meant to reflect or influence the information being presented.

Strategies for Using the Classroom Activities

When you, or an older adult, are presenting these activities to the children, keep the following points in mind:

1. As you prepare to present an activity to the children in your classroom, be sure to read the relevant introductory and background material. Sections I and III of the handbook contain valuable basic information, and the specific material in the early sections of each chapter will help you establish an appropriate context for your presentation. Also, the reference materials listed in the bibliography can provide caregivers and parents with a more detailed analysis of a specific problem.

2. At the end of each Unit you will find a list of children's books which relate in some way to the loss events covered in that unit. See "A Few Words About Children's Books," below, for tips and suggestions on the use of these books in the classroom. The Bibliography of Adult Resources (in Adult Resources,

in the back of the Handbook) provides a categorized list of materials which can provide caregivers and parents with a better understanding of a specific problem. The bibliography also contains a separate list of videotapes and other non-print materials, which may be useful for in-service training sessions or parent meetings.

3 The Adult Resources section of the Handbook also contains a selection of Activity Patterns. Some of the chapter Activity/Experiences require the use of pictures, which may not be easy to obtain. These patterns are intended to reduce preparation time by eliminating the need to search through magazines and catalogs for appropriate photos. The artwork in this section is keyed to specific activities, and can be duplicated ahead of time for use during the activity. When such patterns are available, it is noted in the activity procedure.

4 While the activities have been designed to match the conceptual level and ability of preschool children, they do not have to be performed exactly as written. Keep in mind the intent or purpose of the activity, and vary the materials and procedures to meet the needs of the caregivers, older adults, and children in your particular group.

5 The activities do not have to be presented in any particular order. However, it is important when introducing an activity to refer to any previous activities the children have done.

6 In general, these activities will be most successful if they are done in small groups and led by an older adult.

7 In most instances, these activities were designed to be presented as part of the regular choices offered to children during a "free play" period. An elder staff member can be assigned to supervise or to act as a resource person for a particular activity.

8 An activity can (and should) be introduced during a group time by simply telling the children that it will be available and that a caregiver or resource person will help them with it. While children should not be forced to participate, it is entirely appropriate to encourage them to do so.

9 At some time during the day provide an opportunity to talk about the activity by:

- asking the children to offer their ideas about what happened (as you listen, don't interrupt, unless it's to comment on their fantasies and gently correct any distortions)

- offering supportive comments about any feelings that are expressed, reassuring the children that it is all right to have such feelings and to talk about them
- keeping your questions open-ended
- allowing spontaneous, free discussions, with the children responding to each others' comments instead of simply answering adult questions
- being alert to clues about children's misperceptions and helping to clarify these misunderstandings

10 Through group discussions, you can assess what the children know or have learned through an activity and can help them integrate the information into their developing knowledge and experiences. Preaching, moralizing and "grilling" children for rote answers may have the opposite effect, inhibiting their learning as well as your understanding of their issues.

Remember, these activities are *reactive* in nature, that is, they are designed to be used when a child in your care is "having a hard time." In all of these discussions and activities, the goal is to bring children to a greater understanding of their experiences with loss and separation, and to a greater integration of thought, action, and feeling.

Partnering With Parents

Each chapter of this handbook contains a section entitled "Parent-Staff Communication." Your ability to provide support and assistance for a child in distress will be greatly increased if you can work in partnership with the child's parents. This partnership is developed through a parent-staff relationship that should begin before the child even enters the program, with intake procedures that clarify expectations and provide adequate background information for teachers or caregivers. The comfortable relationship established initially should be maintained through positive communication strategies that include:

- daily verbal exchange of information about the child's behavior at home and in the classroom
- written communications (newsletters, announcements of special events, children's reactions to program activities, etc.)
- parent meetings that present program information and also deal with parent concerns
- regularly scheduled individual parent-staff conferences
- reference materials on child development or parenting topics
- an open-door policy concerning parent visitation

Even in the context of an established positive relationship, many life crises, almost by definition, are difficult for parents to discuss comfortably. A caregiver usually finds out

about a child's loss experience in one of three ways, each of which demands a particular strategy for working with the parents.

In the first (and least common) scenario, the parent approaches a staff member and freely shares the important information. This may occur if the event is not particularly embarrassing and if the caregiver has established a strong professional relationship with the child's family. Of course, this sets up an ideal situation for developing a joint support strategy.

More commonly, children themselves will share something special during a quiet one-on-one with a favorite caregiver, at the lunch table, or even at group time. In such a situation, the caregiver must approach the parent for clarification. This may not be as awkward as it would seem; many parents will welcome the opportunity to discuss the issue, and the relief from the pressure of keeping a "secret." Also, the fact that the child was comfortable enough to share the information speaks well for the relationship with the caregiver, and will make support strategies easier to implement.

The most difficult situation develops when caregivers detect signs of distress in a child (the "behaviors" described in each chapter). This requires sensitive guesswork, and a delicate approach to parents. Often the best you can do is express your concern, describe the behavior you have been seeing, and hope that the parents will share whatever crisis may have occurred. If no information is offered, you will be forced to work in the dark, and without some important partners. Still, all is not lost; in fact, many of the less literal activities in this handbook will offer you some guidance as you develop a "generic" support strategy.

There are many factors which influence a particular family's style of coping with loss. While experts tend to agree about the value of openness and communication in such situations, many cultures and subcultures contain strong, healthy value systems that stress privacy, and dictate that family problems are not suitable subjects for discussion with "outsiders." Early childhood professionals must always consider a family's cultural context, and find ways to support children within that value system.

Finally, do not make the mistake of overlooking grandparents as potential partners in your support-strategy team. Many of these older family members possess, in addition to the wisdom and experience of age, a lifetime of perspective that enables them to see children's difficulties clearly, unobscured by the guilt and distraction that can hamper the child's parents.

We are pleased to note that early childhood practitioners use children's books extensively as a source of support for struggling children. We are also excited by the

sheer number of children's books on separation/loss topics that are currently available to caregivers and parents.

A Few Words About Children's Books

As you may know, books that deal with specific, difficult topics serve a number of important functions. Children feel less lonely and isolated when they listen to a book about someone else who is experiencing the same incident. They also become less embarrassed by their feelings and reactions when these are clearly shared by a character in a book. Children's identification with the characters in a book can bolster their own self-esteem, helping them see the possibility of coping with and ultimately surviving their own situation.

Books also help caring adults create an opportunity for a discussion of a sensitive subject without necessarily violating the child's privacy. Each opportunity, however, must be carefully evaluated ahead of time and arranged with great sensitivity to the needs of a particular child. Some children in some situations, for example, can handle the group attention and support that a caregiver can generate by reading a relevant book to the whole class. Other children will benefit much more from a quiet, private, one-on-one reading experience with a caregiver who is saying, in effect, "I know what you are going through and I'm here to help."

In either case, the value of children's books on sensitive topics depends to a large extent upon the follow-up activities provided by adults. Ideally, such a book would be read to an interested group (or individual child) and followed immediately by an open-ended discussion. After the discussion period, the child(ren) should be given an opportunity to further explore the ideas and feelings through a creative art or dramatic play activity.

A few of the activities in this handbook are designed around specific books, and include appropriate follow-up experiences. Many other activities lend themselves to the use of books as introductory tools, or as a means of re-opening the topic at a later date. When you choose an activity for your classroom, check the Children's Bibliography at the end of the unit before your presentation. You will probably find a book that will suit your purposes; by using it, you increase the impact of both the book and the activity.

Finally, when planning the reading, and the subsequent follow-up activities, do not overlook the added benefit of an older adult's involvement.

Preparing Yourself

In order to ensure success in the classroom, the staff should take time to prepare for an activity — physically and emotionally. It is often difficult for adults to deal with unpleasant topics like death, illness, handicapping conditions, or unusual appearances.

No matter how much they might want to, adults cannot keep children from experiencing disturbing or frightening loss and separation events. We do children a disservice if we ignore such an experience or pretend that it did not occur. In most cases, the urge to avoid a child's painful experience springs from our own discomfort with the issue. Staff members who are planning to present an activity from the handbook should clarify their own perceptions by discussing and analyzing their previous experience with the incident in question — and their feelings about it. The staff development module contained in Section IV of the handbook (Helping Children Cope...) is designed to improve caregivers' ability to understand children's separation and loss issues through an examination their own feelings and reactions. As you will learn in the next section, any separation or loss experience taps into basic, complex, deeply-rooted issues — for adults as well as for children.

III THE MEANING OF SEPARATION AND LOSS EXPERIENCES

A Separate Identity

The experience of being born is our first great loss. Being thrown from the mother's womb into the blinding light of a delivery room is not usually considered a loss, since we tend to think of it from the parent's point of view. Yet with the severing of the umbilical cord comes our first separation from the all-giving, all-nurturing mother. As infants develop through the first three years of life, they slowly come to the realization that they are separate from the mother, and separate from fathers, grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, and brothers and sisters. It is a long journey from birth to separateness, yet the coping skills that infants acquire during these first three years will have an important influence on the developing person's ability to handle loss in other situations — from the commonplace losses of growing up to the ability to handle the crisis of severe loss, should it come their way.

Psychoanalyst Margaret S. Mahler studied children extensively in an attempt to identify the stages through which they progress as they grow from birth to age three, when a sense of identity is formed. In her work, she describes the process of *initial attachment*, and the stages of *separation/individuation* that follow. Each of the stages represents a loss of some kind: from the loss of a symbiotic relationship with the universe to the losses associated with becoming an independent person with thoughts and feelings unique to oneself. And even though there is much to be gained during these periods of development, giving up earlier patterns of behavior can always be hard, for adults and for children. Understanding the processes of growing and giving up can help adults support children as they enter the preschool years, bringing with them already established patterns of coping with losses.

Normal Autism

During the first month of life, infants are generally oblivious to the world around them. They have a vague sense that people "out there" are caring for them and that objects surround them, but, for the most part, these people and objects have no specific appeal. Mahler labels this stage as normal autism, in reference to the infants' focus on inner states and their own comfort levels. Loss at this stage of development reflects a loss in comfort level. When newborns are wet or cold or hungry, the whole world seems an uncaring and horrible place. When their comfort level is restored, newborns are at peace with themselves and the world.

Symbiosis

Only after several weeks of life do infants begin to notice that there are specific people in their environment, and even those people hold no special place in their lives. As long as the adults are caring for them, infants sense the caring and relate that to their growing

awareness of an all-good, giving parent with whom they are making an attachment. The symbiotic relationship that develops between the primary caregiver and the baby reflects the attraction and mutuality of falling in love. Infants at this stage are indeed falling in love, but in the early stages there is not a sense that the other person is specific. Rather, the quality of care, the responses, the style of interacting come to represent the caring adult with whom the child is making attachment. This explains why babies can so often accept the care of numerous caregivers in the early months of life, and why they seldom react strongly to changes unless the style and level of care differs greatly from person to person.

Losses during this stage reflect a loss of trust. When care is inconsistent or nonexistent during the early months of life due to the emotional or physical absence of the parent or caregiver, babies lose the sense of trust that they will be well cared for. If, on the other hand, the care is stable and consistent through a series of significant losses, babies under four or five months of age may not perceive the situation as a loss at all.

Differentiation

The situation begins to change around five or six months of age, when infants start to recognize that the significant people in their lives are separate from themselves and different from others. At this stage, babies may begin to sense loss in even brief separations from the mother. They are learning to recognize that the mother, father, or caregiver is the specific person who has cared for them, and may protest at any substitution in care, no matter how brief. Any change, separation, or absence at this stage of development is perceived as a loss of that special relationship.

While serious and traumatic events such as floods or tornados may have some impact on an infant, for the most part the event will only affect the child as it affects the relationship with the significant others. If those adults are emotionally or physically unavailable during times of loss, infants will experience the loss much more directly than in situations where the adult's availability is maintained throughout the event.

Practicing

A practicing young toddler (12-17 months) has a fairly good sense of his or her relationship with parents and/or caregivers. Children at this stage are more likely to notice changes or losses that affect the environment, because they are more focused on exploring and understanding the world around them. Moves that involve changes in residence or changes in the caregiving setting may be carried with a young child at this stage, recorded only in sensory images. For instance, a forty-year-old woman once related to a colleague her recollection of the home in which she lived when she was under two years of age. That recollection was the image of the hanging fringe of a lace tablecloth and the whistle of kettle from the kitchen stove. Other adults may recall the

pattern of the carpet on which they crawled as young toddlers. Youngsters at this age will be particularly sensitive to losses that mean a change in environment as well as losses that affect the relationships in their lives.

Rapprochement

The next stage begins about the time toddlers suddenly discover that people come and go and that there is the possibility of being abandoned. Suddenly, toddlers seem to need constant reassurance that the parent or caregiver is there. A regression to clinging and whining behaviors often occurs. Adults are sometimes overwhelmed with this new urgency for an intense relationship, and may often respond by insisting on independence rather than allowing time for the children to refuel.

If young children perceive that significant adults are not available during this phase, there can be lasting effects on their ability to deal with loss and changes. One possible outcome is the development of an "I don't care" attitude, denying the sense of loss and acting as if losses don't matter. Another variation is for toddlers to develop a sense of deprivation, acting as if no one has ever met their needs, and coming to expect that no one ever will. To these children, everything can be perceived as a loss. The unavailability of the mother or caregiver for even brief periods seems totally unbearable. Even as older children, they may be unable to appreciate the availability of friends or family. They worry that a time will come when a loved one will not be available, and thus confirm their sense of being "unlovable."

Losses and changes during this period of life must be handled with care, so as not to reinforce the notion that significant others are unavailable. If there must be a change in caregiver, the birth of a sibling, or a change in residence, children will need even more reassurance and responsiveness than usual.

Self-Identity

By the time children have reached the stage of self-identity, they have a fairly good sense of themselves and their separateness from others. If early changes and losses have been handled successfully, there is a good chance that these children will be able to cope with normal developmental losses, with perhaps minor regressions and need for support from adults. More severe losses however, are bound to elicit stronger reactions and young children tend to respond to losses in much the same way they have responded to the loss of the mother as an integral part of themselves.

Children (and adults) tend to return to the coping techniques that worked when they were younger. If acting independent and competent was an effective strategy in bringing an adult closer, that is likely to be the way children will respond to crises. If on the other hand, adults responded to their direct expressions of distress as infants or toddlers, youngsters will be more able to express their feelings about loss directly and

openly. If children learned that whining, clinging, or putting oneself in unsafe situations was the way to bring adults closer, then those same inappropriate strategies will be the ones they rely on.

The Preschool Years

By the time a child is three years old, these patterns of coping with loss are fairly well established. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that children recapitulate the stages of separation and individuation upon entering nursery school, and that even in the lives of adults, there are parallels between Mahler's stages and mature attachment/ individuation patterns (within marriages, for example).

Within these established patterns, the developmental issues facing three-, four-, and five-year-olds are different. Preschool children's reactions to loss depend first on their past abilities to handle loss and then on the particular developmental vulnerabilities of their age. For instance, three-year-olds who have experienced tornados tend to play out their concerns by taking on nurturing roles repetitively, pretending to take care of stuffed animals and dolls. Their concerns about being nurtured, so typical of threes, was heightened when their own safety was called into question. Any change or loss may bring a similar response: three-year-olds may need reassurance that adults will come back to care for them, that even when they have to move, the family will stay together, or that parents will still love and care for them after divorcing each other.

Four-year-olds, on the other hand, may be more concerned about assigning blame to someone for the move or divorce. Their developmental tendency to focus on aggression and control may be expressed directly through angry responses toward the people who have "caused" the loss, or may be seen more indirectly, through a lowered sense of self-esteem created by blaming themselves for the troubles. Parents often report the difficulties they have in dealing with the aftermath of an out-of-town trip, for example, saying "She was fine while we were gone, but things were terrible for days after we returned." Teachers may even report that children were "fine" while their parents were gone, becoming angry and aggressive only when they returned.

By the time children are five, their sense of competence and quest for knowledge will be reflected in their responses to loss. For instance, one five-year-old, preparing for a move, buried a time capsule in the back yard of his old house so that someday someone might learn more about the child who had lived there. Another child responded to the aftermath of a tornado by drawing windows that were opened slightly whenever he drew a picture of his house (having heard from parents and teachers that houses will collapse more easily if the doors and windows are tightly closed during a tornado). Similarly, many five-year-olds coped with their concerns about the war in the Persian Gulf by learning all of the language associated with Desert Storm, from the meaning

of SCUD to the names and descriptions of the various helicopters and military equipment.

The Role of the Adult

The role then for adults is to respond individually to children's needs during periods of crisis, change, and loss. Individual children will react differently to the same stressful event, depending upon their developmental age and their previous success at coping with loss. If we understand where children are developmentally, it will be easier to understand where the support must be provided. In general, adults can meet children's need for support by being available and by allowing children to identify and gain mastery over the feelings of loss.

Losses differ in their intensity and their seriousness, although even the most common experiences of having haircuts and losing teeth can seem pretty traumatic to some children. For that reason, the chapters of this handbook are divided according to various types of losses, always mindful of the fact that for many children, the same kind of intense support may be needed for developmental losses as for catastrophic losses, at least for a period of time.

What are developmental losses?

We all experience losses as we grow and develop: we give up old ways of thinking as we learn new information, we change in our relationships with our families, and we often experience a sense of loss in giving up our first car, first house, or first job. For children, it's much the same: They sometimes have a hard time accepting substitute caregivers or teachers, or have difficulty preparing for the first haircut or losing the first tooth. Even family vacations or holidays represent a loss of familiar routines and schedules. It is sometimes hard for children to see the long term gains, and their responses to normal developmental losses can be intense at times. Yet for the most part, with support from caring adults, children learn to accept the losses that are part of development and can move on.

What are life experience losses?

There are other losses that are a little harder to deal with because they represent giving up objects or relationships that are valued and cherished. Accepting a new baby into the family means having to give up one's status as the only child or the youngest child as well as having to share the time and attention of the parents. The death of a pet or the illness of a friend can trigger concerns about one's own vulnerability as well. Moving to a new home, and simply moving to a new classroom, are life experiences that are often expected, yet still very unsettling for young children whose needs for consistency and stability are high.

What are traumatic losses?

More serious losses include a stay at the hospital, the separation or divorce of parents, the hospitalization of a family member, or even the indirect experience of traumatic loss to others, through observation of the event or even through television coverage of its aftermath. At these times, adults must be even more sensitive to the effects of loss on children and the ways that they can be available and supportive. These events are often unusual, and fortunately noticeable, so that adults more readily see the symptoms and respond to the children's needs.

What are catastrophic losses?

Unfortunately, there are times in a child's life when he or she experiences a loss so intense that adult intervention is essential. Such situations include the death of a family member, a fire in the home, or being the victim of violence and abuse. At these times, teachers, parents, grandparents, and other adults can be supportive, but must also be alert to symptoms that require professional therapeutic intervention.

Children's Reactions to Loss

Feelings of loss remain much the same, no matter what the cause. The intensity or duration of the feelings may vary, but all children tend to go through similar stages of grieving as they cope with loss. Initially, children may deny that a loss has occurred. Teachers may be surprised to hear that a favorite pet died unexpectedly because the child never mentioned it, or adults may not be prepared for the nonchalance of a child whose grandparent just died. Sometimes the period of denial is short; other times it may last days or even weeks, months or years.

Because preschoolers still believe in magical thinking, they often think they can make the situation change. They may believe they can "wish" the loved one back to life, or "make" the parents love one another again. It's a hard realization to a child to know that he or she is not omnipotent and cannot wish the situation away. It's understandable that the first step in accepting a painful event includes a period of protest. Older children may want to know why something has happened, or express displeasure at the unfairness of the situation. Younger children may protest by becoming oppositional about everything.

These protest behaviors can become quite intense as children express the anger and guilt they may feel. Preschoolers often want to blame someone — themselves or others. If they blame parents for a separation or divorce, they may overtly act out in angry ways. On the other hand, they may blame themselves for the separation and intentionally hide their feelings of anger for fear of losing the parent's love or fear of losing the affection of the teacher or caregiver.

Once children begin to get over their anger, there is a period of mourning. This can

often be seen in the "low-key" behavior of children whose parents have gone away for a few days. The child may seem listless, unable to participate in daily activities. Even children routinely left in child care settings for the day may demonstrate "low-key" behaviors each morning as they begin to cope with the loss. Quite often this mourning behavior quickly changes to anger as soon as the parent returns — either from the overnight trip or at the end of the day. Caregivers have surely observed the angry reunion behavior of some children who protested violently when the parent left, and then refused to leave at the end of the day, as a way of demonstrating their anger at having been left.

One concern that caregivers have about this stage of grieving is that the anger is often turned inward; children may seem to be adjusting, when in fact their low-key behavior indicates a sadness and depression that requires adult intervention. Rather than allowing children to be left alone to deal with their sadness, adults should become actively engaged, either by holding the distressed child, or by sitting nearby and demonstrating availability. When infants are inconsolable, it is tempting to just let them cry it out, rather than holding and carrying around a crying child. Yet holding and carrying is just what the child needs. Being left alone will not help the child who is grieving over the significant loss of a parent — even if it is only for a few hours. To the young child, even a few hours can seem like an eternity, and the coping styles developed during those few hours often remain for life.

When children are successful at coping with the feelings of loss, they more easily reach the final stage of grieving, which is acceptance. Children may wistfully talk about where their parents have gone, but their ability to focus on the activities at hand suggest they have reached some level of acceptance. Encouraging children to forget too soon about losses will prevent them from moving through the stages of grieving. When that happens, the feelings don't disappear, they simply go underground and come back later — often more intensely.

What Adults Can Do

Provide stability and consistency.

Whenever children are experiencing changes, there is an added need for dependable schedules and routines. Keeping everything as stable and consistent as possible helps the child cope with the losses. At these times, children often see every disruption as a loss. For instance, one child whose mother just had a new baby found herself unable to handle the classroom field trip to the zoo. It was hard enough for her to let her mother leave the center (with the new baby in her arms); having to actually leave the center, even for the long-awaited field trip, was more than she could manage. Her concern was that her mother would come back for her and she wouldn't be there. This added anxiety placed too much stress on a child who was already a bit worried about

being displaced. The teacher responded by inviting the parent to join them at the zoo mid-morning and ride back on the bus with the children.

Another child in a similar situation found it helpful when the caregiver allowed her to take her favorite teddy bear along on the field trip. In this case, the teacher was able to recognize that the added bother of an extra toy would make a world of difference in the child's ability to handle the changes in routine that a field-trip entails.

Provide a time for listening.

Children often have a lot to tell adults, if the time is right and the atmosphere is relaxed. Informal conversations with children not only enhance their language development, but also provide a wonderful opportunity to find out what is on children's minds. This insight into their thoughts and feelings will assist teachers and caregivers in becoming an ally to a child who is experiencing a loss.

Accept children's feelings.

Far too often, we as adults want to respond to children's expressions of anger, fear, and sadness by denying them with comments like "Oh, you don't really hate your daddy;" or "Cheer up! Maybe you can get a new doggy." Children need adult help in labeling the feelings they have. Being honest about the anger and fear and sadness is the best way to learn to handle those emotions. If we tell children they aren't angry when they're feeling very angry, or if we imply they should not feel angry when they really do, we simply push the feelings (and often the child) aside.

Once children are comfortable expressing their feelings, caregivers can talk about the best way to let people know how they feel. For instance, they can explain that tipping over baby's stroller is not acceptable no matter how angry you are, but saying "I wish he would go away" is an honest and appropriate expression of your feelings. Since the baby is not going to go away, teachers can best help children by saying things like, "I know you wish your brother would go away, but he isn't going to. Can you think of something you might like to do with him one day?" Or, "We often feel angry when someone seems to taking our place. Can you think of some special things that you can do that your brother can't (paint a picture, build with blocks, etc.)?" These non-judgmental responses validate the child's feelings but provide options for reacting to those feelings.

Provide opportunities for play.

Because children are so new in their use of language, they often don't have the words to express their concerns. Adults can help by labeling feelings and behaviors, but often children just need another way of expressing their feelings. Symbolic play and art are wonderful non-verbal means of expression. Observing children's play can give caregivers insight into children's understanding and acceptance of events while

providing safe alternatives for expressing anger. One three-year-old made a fabulous painting for her new baby brother, and entitled it "The Hand of the Monster."! This symbolic expression of hostility decreased (rather than increased) the likelihood that she would get herself into trouble by subtly poking or pinching the intruder with her own hands, providing her with a much more appropriate way to express her jealous feelings.

Provide activities to channel feelings.

There are many activities suggested in this handbook that will help caregivers and teachers provide alternative outlets for expressing fear, anger, and sadness. Additionally, these activities help children begin to master the feelings and events. For instance, children who are having difficulty with separation will find hide-and-find games or peek-a-boo activities especially meaningful. Here they can play out the separation and establish some control over the disappearance and reappearance of toys.

One child who was having difficulty separating from his mother and a brother in the next classroom found sand play to be an effective coping activity. Each day he would bury the dinosaurs in the sand and "find" them again. One day he built a wall and placed an animal on each side, saying "This horse has a brother on the other side of the wall." Similarly, this child had a brother "on the other side of the wall;" being able to control the separation in his play made it that much more manageable.

In summary, adults' response to children experiencing loss will have a great effect on how well the child learns to cope. Sensitive and caring adults who are available and empathic will find that children open up when they are ready to talk. Even when they aren't ready to talk, they still need the availability of adults. This is often expressed by providing a lap or sitting nearby, sometimes in silence, but always there.

IV STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODULE

Helping Children Cope With Separation and Loss

Content Overview

This training unit will help adult caregivers understand how their personal experience with loss shapes their child care practices. Caregivers will discuss the preschool child's understanding and response to loss and explore how to use the separation and loss handbook in the classroom and with parents.

Objectives

I. To define a loss experience.

II. To examine personal experiences with loss and their influence on appropriate developmental practice.

III. To recognize the impact of loss experiences as they relate to normal growth and development of young children

IV. To demonstrate how a developmentally appropriate curriculum can be used to support children during times of loss and separation.

V. To discuss methods for using the Separation and Loss Handbook with staff and parents.

Reference Material

Separation and Loss: A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals

Handouts

a. Loss Experiences
b. Personal Experience Worksheet
c. Stages of Grieving
d. Providing Support to Children
e. Strategies for Using the Classroom Activities/experiences
f. Partnering With Parents

Schedule

A. DEFINITION OF SEPARATION AND LOSS
B. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH LOSS
C. USING THEORIES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT TO UNDERSTAND LOSS
D. THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEVING
E. PROVIDING SUPPORT TO CHILDREN
F. CURRICULUM APPLICATIONS: THE USE OF THE HANDBOOK ON SEPARATION AND LOSS
G. PARENT COMMUNICATION

Procedure

A. DEFINITION OF SEPARATION AND LOSS

1. Begin the training session by asking the participants to think about loss. Ask the group to help you develop a working definition of the word "loss" by telling you what it means to them. Accept answers that touch on the following dictionary definitions:
   - *to miss from one's possession or from a customary or supposed place*
   - *to part with, especially in an unforeseen or accidental manner*
   - *to fail to keep control of, or the allegiance of [something or someone]*
   - *a final separation from [something or someone]*
   - *to fail to keep, sustain, or maintain*
2. When you have generated a satisfactory working definition, pass out the *"Loss Experiences"* worksheet (handout a). Tell the participants to read the list on the worksheet, and to put a (*) beside any events they experienced as a child. Next tell them to place an (X) beside any events they experienced as an adult.
3. Now ask the group, "What are the feelings that we associate with experiences of loss?" Examples may include:
   - sadness
   - fear
   - mistrust
   - anxiety
   - loneliness
   - anger
   - denial
   - different
   - worry
   - uncertainty
   - insecurity
   - depression
   - out-of-control
   - frustration
   - abandonment

B. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH LOSS

1. Introduce this section of the workshop by telling the trainees:

   "If adults are to help children cope successfully with loss, they must first learn to acknowledge those issues in their own lives. Now we are going to use the events you identified to do an activity that can help prepare us for understanding a child's experience with loss."

2. Now ask the participants select a partner and give each pair a copy of the Personal Experience Worksheet (handout b). Ask one member of the pair to choose a loss event, either from the previous discussion or from her own memory, that represents a personal experience from her own childhood. The other partner should select a loss event that reflects an experience she had as an adult. The task of each participant is to use the worksheet to guide a discussion of their loss experience, recording the information in the appropriate column of the worksheet.

3. Tell the participants to begin by transferring the event and how they felt onto the worksheet. Next, ask the participants to try to remember how they behaved, pointing out that their behavior and feelings may have been different at different points. For example, say: "Perhaps you didn't cry at first, but later cried often. Can you remember how others responded to you? What was helpful or what was not? Complete as much of the chart as you can."

4. Now ask the participants to compare the two loss events (the one experienced as a child and the one experienced as an adult) and record some observations about the similarities and differences for sharing with the whole group.

5. Reassemble the large group. Ask one or two pairs to briefly share their experience. Make the following points during a discussion:
   - the feelings were very much the same even though the context changed
   - children and adults shared the same feelings
   - the feelings changed over time
   - the trainees' cognitive ability at different ages, and their previous experience with loss, influenced their later response to loss

C. USING THEORIES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT TO UNDERSTAND LOSS

1. Now tell the trainees that they are going to consider the ways in which children's developmental stages affect their response to loss. Remind the participants that children are individuals, i.e. one child may perceive a loss situation as a crisis; to another, the same event is a minor problem.

2. Write the following age categories on the chalkboard:

   - birth to 12 months
   - 12 to 18 months
   - 18 to 24 months
   - 24 months to 3 years
   - 3 to 4 years
   - 4 to 5 years
   - 5 to 6 years.

Ask: "What is the developmental task of infants birth to 12 months?" (refer to the theories of Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget as background for some general statements about this stage of development. Some reference material for your discussion can be found in Section III, "The Meaning of Separation and Loss Experiences"). Lead the discussion to reach the following conclusions for each developmental stage:

BIRTH TO 12 MONTHS

During their first year-and-a-half of life, infants will perceive loss only in relation to:

- their own comfort
- their sense of trust

Infants do sense the emotions (anger, depression and anxiety) of the caregiver, and their distress is reflected in signs such as disturbed eating and sleeping patterns.

12 TO 18 MONTHS

Children at this stage are focused on exploring and understanding their world. Therefore, they are more likely to notice, and be disturbed by, changes in their environment, as well as losses that affect their relationships.

18 TO 24 MONTHS

At this age, children's focus on their environment and relationships steadily increases. The often tumultuous behavior displayed at this age is related to the child's struggle with dependence and autonomy; any loss or change can be terribly threatening.

24 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS

At this age, children will focus on:

- the availability of the caregiver to provide reassurance
- effective coping strategies developed earlier (those which brought the adult closer) will be used. These may include acting independent, whining and clinging, or putting oneself into unsafe situations.

3 TO 4 YEARS

Young preschool-age children will concern themselves with being nurtured and worry about the availability of adults to meet their needs.

4 TO 5 YEARS

Older pre-school children will have a tendency to blame someone for the occurrence; perhaps themselves. Children's egocentric view of their own involvement in events will contribute to a sense of guilt about causing the events.

5 TO 6 YEARS

Children at this age tends to focus on details and on gathering as much information as they can about a situation. As a result, their methods of coping with loss may involve asking a lot of questions.

In a summary discussion, describe the three main factors which influence the way children react to a loss:

- the developmental stage at which a loss occurs (including a child's current cognitive ability)
- past experience and the coping pattern developed during experiences with loss
- the way that adults responded (and are responding) to a child's expressions of strong feelings

At the end of this discussion, make the following concluding statement:

"Children will express their concerns according to their developmental level, but feelings remain similar at all ages. Because of this, people appear to pass through more or less predictable stages at a time of loss."

D. THE FIVE STAGES OF GRIEVING

1. Prepare a short lecture on the information contained in "The Stages of Grieving" (handout c). Pass out copies of the handout, and, if desired, transfer some of the main points onto a flip chart. Where appropriate during the lecture, use the information generated from the group in earlier exercises to provide examples of each stage.
2. Conclude this section of the training by reading the children's book, *Everett Anderson's Goodbye* (see Bibliography of Children's Books) aloud to the group.

E. PROVIDING SUPPORT TO CHILDREN

Pass out copies of "Providing Support to Children" (handout d). Use the handout as a check list to assess what the staff is already doing to support a particular child. The suggestions are also useful for planning additional strategies.

F. CURRICULUM APPLICATIONS: HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

1. The purpose of this section is to acquaint the staff with *Separation and Loss: A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals.* Use this copy of the handbook to identify the following sections and give a brief overview of each.

   a. **Rationale:** Discusses the importance of separation and loss information to early childhood professionals and the value of older adult participation.

   b. **Using the Handbook:** specific instructions for using the information provided in the handbook chapters.

   c. **The Meaning of Separation and Loss Experiences:** Provides an overview of the knowledge necessary for understanding and supporting children during experiences of loss.

   d. **Classroom Units and Chapters:** This section is divided into four units:

      I. Developmental Loss
      II. Life Experience Loss
      III. Traumatic Loss
      IV. Catastrophic Loss

   Within each unit are chapters which address specific loss events. Each Chapter provides information on the feelings and behaviors of children and tips on establishing parent/staff communication. The curriculum section provides field-tested activities for use in the classroom.

e. Children's Book Bibliography
For each unit, there is a list of children's books which address relevant topics. The authors endorse the ongoing integration of children's books into the curriculum, even if there is no reference specified in a given chapter.

f. Adult Resources Bibliography
Provides a beginning for the development of an extensive reference library for teachers, parents, and others interested in this topic.

2. Distribute copies of "Strategies for Using the Classroom Activity/Experiences." (handout e). Work through the handout briefly with the participants, discussing the implementation strategies as they apply to their particular situations.

3. Complete this section on the use of the handbook by selecting a relevant curriculum activity and demonstrating the use of one chapter.

G. PARENT COMMUNICATION

1. Pass out copies of the "Partnering With Parents" handout. Use it as discussion starter or as a way of analyzing current parent-staff communication practices.

2. Refer to "Partnering With Parents" (in the section entitled "Using the Handbook") for additional information on working with parents during a loss crisis. In the discussion, note that effective parent communication depends on establishing a comfortable relationship between staff and parents. When a crisis situation occurs communication with parents will be affected by:
    - the teacher/parent relationship
    - the psychological impact of the event
    - the amount of change involved
    - the teacher's and the parent's attitude to loss

You may also wish to use this opportunity to address a relevant parent/staff situation.

To close the training session, select an assortment of children's and adult books from the bibliographies and provide time for participants to freely examine the material.

35

EXPERIENCED AS A CHILD (X) EXPERIENCED AS AN ADULT (O)

LOSS EXPERIENCES

Handout a

- [ ] Competitions
- [ ] Death as a Part of the Life Cycle
- [ ] Family Vacation Trip
- [ ] Haircut
- [ ] Loss of Transition Object
- [ ] Substitute Teacher (During a Temporary Absence)
- [ ] Toileting Accidents
- [ ] Change in Routine at Home
- [ ] Daylight Savings Time
- [ ] The Death of a Pet
- [ ] Disruption in Classroom Routine
- [ ] Family Foster Care
- [ ] A Friend's Illness
- [ ] A Friend Leaves the Center
- [ ] Leaving the Day Care Center
- [ ] Missing Body Part
- [ ] Moving
- [ ] A New Baby in the Family
- [ ] Starting Day Care
- [ ] Traveling Parent
- [ ] Becoming a Step Family
- [ ] Exposure to TV Violence or Scary Programs
- [ ] Going to the Hospital
- [ ] Hospitalization of a Family Member
- [ ] Loss of Property
- [ ] News Reports of a Disaster
- [ ] Separation and/or Divorce
- [ ] Shared Custody
- [ ] A Teacher Leaves the Center
- [ ] Death of a Family Member
- [ ] Loss Due to Fire

STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODULE	
LOSS EVENT	
How Did You Feel initially...	
weeks later...	
months later...	
a year later...	
How Did You Behave? initially...	
weeks later...	
months later...	
a year later...	
How Did You Respond?	
What Others Did That Helped	
What Others Did That Was Not Helpful	

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WORKSHEET

Handout b

STAGES OF GRIEVING

Handout c

1. Denial

Denial is a natural reaction to loss. The child may be in the state of "this isn't happening, it can't be true, no not me"

Child's Reaction
- impassive, indifferent, non-reaction, may be overly curious about details
- children will have difficulty in organizing and expressing their feelings, pretend it didnt happen

2. Protest

Moving from denial, the child may ask, in effect, "why me?" A child'a anger may also be turned inward, causing the child to feel bitter, irritable or helpless. Anger can also be expressed towards those who, at least in the child's eyes, caused the loss.

Child's Reaction
- anger, confusion, temper tantrums, aggression, guilt, insecurity may assign blame
- may think they caused the loss with their own naughty behavior

3. Bargaining

Children may think they can reverse the loss with good behavior, or by making other promises which they believe will change the situation

Child's Reaction
- exceptionally good behavior, promise to be good, or want to do good deeds

4. Depression/withdrawal

Children may feel guilty; in their limited experience, bad things happen because someone was bad. Children may search their own memories and feelings for the cause of the loss. These feelings and thoughts may prevent the child from focusing on the task at hand or joining in with group activities.

Child's Reaction
- loss of appetite, sleep disruptions
- inability to handle fear and anxiety
- excessive excitability or defiance
- great sense of loss

5. Acceptance

Children begin to accept the finality of the situation. They begin to reorganize their life around the new circumstance and reestablish normal relationships. They may express a desire to possess some tangible reminders of the missing person, place, or thing (such as a photograph). They begin to be able to remember the past.

Child's Reaction
- ability to focus on the task at hand
- accepting that the situation is unchangeable and permanent

In Times of Loss, Young Children Need:

- a dependable schedule and a stable and consistent routine
- an adult (perhaps an older) to listen and accept the child's feelings in a non-judgmental way
- opportunities for self-directed play
- safe alternatives for expressing anger
- non-verbal means for expression (art, dramatic play)
- structured experiences which allow control and mastery
- outlets for expressing fear and sadness (music, puppets)
- sensitive, caring adults who are available and empathic
- appropriate children's stories which deal with loss issues in a direct, and non-direct fashion
- concrete honest explanations
- avoid use of euphemisms (i.e. "Grandma has gone on a long vacation")
- help with organizing thoughts (Ask, "What do you think of that?"; the child's answer will provide guidance for answering questions)
- safe environment to ask questions
- time to work and re-work through issues
- clear boundaries and limits
- encouragement to talk to other children in a similar situation
- tolerance for the child who may regress into behavior which is below their maturity level
- reassurance for the child that he will be loved and taken care of
- physical contact: holding and hugging the child
- assurance for the child that the event was not his fault
- information for the child about what he can expect
- use of literal or direct support techniques (helping a child who is moving play with two houses, a toy moving van, and dollhouse furniture)
- use of general support techniques (helping a child who can't stand to lose by building up his self-image; helping a child struggling with a joint custody situation by playing concrete "going away and coming back" games)

STRATEGIES FOR USING THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITY/ EXPERIENCES

Handout e

STAFF DEVELOPMENT MODULE

When you, or an older adult, are presenting these activities to the children, keep the following points in mind:

1. As you prepare to present an activity to the children in your classroom, be sure to read the relevant introductory and background material. Sections I and III of the Handbook contain valuable basic information, and the specific material in the early sections of each chapter will help you establish an appropriate context for your presentation. Also, the reference materials listed in the bibliography can provide caregivers and parents with a more detailed analysis of a specific problem.
2. While the activities have been designed to match the conceptual level and ability of preschool children, they do not have to be performed exactly as written. Keep in mind the intent or purpose of the activity, and vary the materials and procedures to meet the needs of the caregivers, older adults, and children in your particular group.
3. The activities do not have to be presented in any particular order. However, it is important when introducing an activity to refer to any previous activities the children have done.
4. In general, these activities will be most successful if they are done in small groups and led by an older adult.
5. In most instances, these activities were designed to be presented as part of the regular choices offered to children during a "free play" period. An elder staff member can be assigned to supervise or to act as a resource person for a particular activity.
6. An activity can (and should) be introduced during a group time by simply telling the children that it will be available, and that a caregiver or resource person will help them with it. While children should not be forced to participate, it is entirely appropriate to encourage them to do so.
7. At some time during the day provide an opportunity to talk about the activity by:
    - asking the children to offer their ideas about what happened (as you listen, don't interrupt, unless it's to comment on their fantasies and gently correct any distortions)
    - offering supportive comments about any feelings that are expressed, reassuring the children that it is all right to have such feelings, and to talk about them
    - keeping your questions open-ended
    - allowing spontaneous, free discussions, with the children responding to each others' comments instead of simply answering adult questions
    - being alert to clues about children's misperceptions, and helping to clarify these misunderstandings

8. Through group discussions, you can assess what the children know or have learned through an activity, and can help them integrate the information into their developing knowledge and experiences. Preaching, moralizing and "grilling" children for rote answers may have the opposite effect, inhibiting their learning as well as your understanding of their issues.

Remember, these activities are *reactive* in nature, that is, they are designed to be used when a child in your care is "having a hard time." In all of these discussions and activities, the goal is to bring children to a greater understanding of their experiences with loss and separation, and to a greater integration of thought, action and feeling.

PARTNERING WITH PARENTS

Handout f

Your ability to provide support and assistance for a child in distress will be greatly increased if you can work in partnership with the child's parents. This partnership is developed through a parent-staff relationship that should begin before the child even enters the program, with intake procedures that clarify expectations and provide adequate background information for teachers or caregivers. The comfortable relationship established initially should be maintained through positive communication strategies that include:

- daily verbal exchange of information about the child's behavior at home and in the classroom
- written communications (newsletters, announcements of special events, children's reactions to program activities, etc.)
- parent meetings that present program information and also deal with parent concerns
- regularly scheduled individual parent-staff conferences
- reference materials on child development or parenting topics
- an open-door policy concerning parent visitation

V PARENT INFORMATION SESSION

Children and Loss

Purpose

Parents will explore how their own past experience with loss can affect their ability to support children during a loss crisis. This session will also help parents understand how children's experience with loss can be influenced by factors which include: the child's developmental level, the attitude of significant adults, and previously established coping patterns. Appropriate practices will be discussed in the context of parent support. *Separation and Loss: A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals* will be examined as a resource tool for parents.

Objectives

I. To examine personal experiences with loss and their influence on appropriate developmental practice.

II. To recognize the impact of loss experiences as they relate to the normal growth and development of children

III. To discuss how developmentally appropriate practices can be used to support children during times of loss and separation.

IV. To discuss methods for using *Separation and Loss: A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals* as a reference tool for parents.

The handouts used in this Information Session can be found at the end of the preceding Staff Development Module.

Objective I

To examine personal experiences with loss and their influence on appropriate developmental practice.

1. Introduce the session by telling the parents:

   "If adults are to help children cope successfully with loss, they must first learn to acknowledge those issues in their own lives. We are going to do an exercise that can help you understand a child's experience with loss by drawing on loss experiences from your own lives."

2. Now ask the parents to select a partner and give each pair a copy of the "Personal Experience Worksheet" (Handout b). Ask one member of the pair to choose a loss event that represents a personal experience from their own childhood. The other partner should select a loss event that reflects an experience they had as an adult. The task of each participant is to use the worksheet to guide a discussion of each loss experience, recording the information in the appropriate column of the worksheet.

3. Tell the parents to begin by transferring the event and how they felt onto the worksheet. Next, ask them to try to remember how they behaved, pointing out that

their behavior and feelings may have been different at different points. For example, say: "Perhaps you didn't cry at first, but later cried often. Can you remember how others responded to you? What was helpful or what was not? Complete as much of the chart as you can."

4. Now ask the parents to compare the loss events (the one experienced as a child and the one experienced as an adult) and record some observations about the similarities and differences for sharing with the whole group. One similarity, for example, might be that both the adult and child experienced difficulty sleeping during the loss event.
5. Reassemble the large group. Ask one or two pairs to briefly share their experience. Make the following points during the discussion:
    - the feelings were very much the same even though the context changed
    - children and adults shared the same feelings
    - the feelings changed over time
    - the parents' cognitive ability at different ages, and their previous experience with loss, influenced their later responses

Objective II

To recognize the impact of loss experiences as they relate to the normal growth and development of children

1. Tell the group that they are going to consider the ways in which children's developmental stages affect their response to loss. Remind the parents that children are individuals, i.e. one child may perceive a loss situation as a crisis; to another the same event is a minor incident.
2. Prepare a short lecture on the theories of Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget, to provide some general developmental background. Reference material for your discussion can be found in Section III, "The Meaning of Separation and Loss Experiences."
3. Write the following age categories on the chalkboard and lead a discussion, reaching the following conclusions about each developmental stage:
    - birth to 12 months
    - 12 to 18 months
    - 18 to 24 months
    - 24 months to 3 years
    - 3 to 4 years
    - 4 to 5 years
    - 5 to 6 years

BIRTH TO 12 MONTHS

During their first year of life, infants perceive loss in relation to their comfort and their sense of trust. Infants do sense the emotions (anger, depression and anxiety) of the caregiver, and their distress is reflected in signs such as disturbed eating and sleeping patterns.

12 TO 18 MONTHS

Children at this stage are focused on exploring and understanding their world. Therefore, they are more likely to notice, and be disturbed by, changes in their environment, as well as losses that affect their relationships.

18 TO 24 MONTHS

At this age, children's focus on their environment and relationships steadily increases. The often tumultuous behavior displayed at this age is related to the child's struggle with dependence and autonomy; any loss or change can be terribly threatening.

24 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS

At this age, children may focus on the availability of the caregiver to provide reassurance. Effective coping strategies developed earlier (those which brought the adult closer) will be used. These may include acting independent, whining and clinging, or putting oneself into unsafe situations.

3 TO 4 YEARS

Young preschool-age children will concern themselves with being nurtured, and worry about the availability of adults to meet their needs

4 TO 5 YEARS

Older preschool children will have a tendency to blame someone for the occurrence: perhaps themselves. Children's egocentric view of their own involvement in events will contribute to a sense of guilt about causing the events.

5 TO 6 YEARS

Children at this age tends to focus on details and on gathering as much information as they can about a situation. As a result, their methods of coping with loss may involve asking a lot of questions.

4. In a summary discussion, describe the three main factors which influence the way children react to a loss:
    - the developmental stage at which a loss occurs (including a child's current cognitive ability)
    - past experience and the coping pattern developed during experiences with loss
    - the way that adults responded (and are responding) to a child's expres sions of strong feelings

At the end of this discussion, make the following concluding statement:

> "Children will express their concerns according to their developmental level, but feelings remain similar at all ages. Because of this, people appear to pass through more or less predictable stages at a time of loss."

5. Prepare a short lecture on the information contained in the "The Stages of Grieving" (Handout c). Pass out copies of the handout, and, if desired, transfer some of the main points onto a flip chart. Where appropriate during the lecture, use the information generated from the group in earlier exercises to provide examples of each stage.
6. Conclude this section of the training by reading the children's book, *Everett Anderson's Goodbye* (Lucille Clifton) aloud to the group.

To discuss how developmentally appropriate practices can be used to support children during times of loss and separation — Objective III

Pass out copies of "Providing Support to Children" (Handout d). Use the handout as a check list to assess what the parents are already doing to support a particular child. The suggestions are also useful for planning additional strategies.

To discuss methods for using the Separation and Loss Handbook as a reference tool for parents. — Objective IV

The purpose of this section is to acquaint the staff with *Separation and Loss: A Handbook for Early Childhood Professionals*. Use your copy of this handbook to identify the following sections and give a brief overview of each.

a. Rationale

> Discusses the importance of separation and loss information to early child hood professionals and the value of older adult participation.

b. Using the Handbook:

> Contains specific instructions for using the information provided in the handbook chapters.

c. The Meaning of Separation and Loss Experiences

> Provides an overview of the knowledge necessary for understanding and supporing children during experiences of loss.

d. Classroom Units and Chapters: This section is divided into four units

I. Developmental Loss
II. Life Experience Loss
III. Traumatic Loss
IV. Catastrophic Loss

Within each unit are chapters which address specific loss events. Each Chapter provides information on the feelings and behaviors of children and tips on establishing parent/staff communication. The curriculum section provides field-tested activities for use in the classroom.

e. Children's Book Bibliography

At the end of each unit, there is a list of children's books which address relevant topics. The authors endorse the ongoing integration of children's books into the curriculum, even if there is no reference specified in a given chapter.

f. Adult Resources Bibliography

Provides a beginning for the development of an extensive reference library for teachers, parents, and others interested in this topic.

Complete this section on the use of the Handbook by selecting a relevant curriculum activity and demonstrating the use of one chapter.

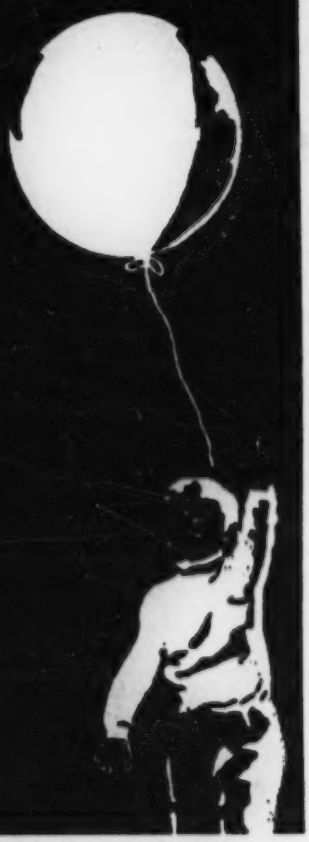
To close the information session, present an assortment of children's and adult books from the Bibliographies, and provide time for parents to freely examine the materials.

DEVELOPMENTAL LOSS

UNIT

Chapters

1. Death as a Part of the Life Cycle
2. Family Vacation Trip
3. Haircut
4. Loss of Transition Object
5. Substitute Teacher
   (During a Temporary Absence)
6. Toileting Accidents
7. Winning and Losing



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Unit I: Developmental Losses

As Judith Viorst writes in her best-selling book, *Necessary Losses*, losses are a universal and unavoidable part of life. They are necessary because throughout life, we grow by losing, and leaving, and letting go. For young children, coping with the day-to-day losses of growing up can be difficult and unsettling. We don't often consider, for example, what children must feel as they prepare for a first haircut. A stranger wielding a pair of scissors around one's head can be frightening enough; but any change in outward appearance can make a young child wonder if he or she is still the same person inside. When children look in the mirror after a haircut and see an image very different from the one they have come to know as their own, they may have difficulty integrating that image into their sense of who they are.

Normal developmental losses can be complicated by the everyday life experiences that children face. When children already feel unsure about themselves, simple events such a family vacation can upset their sense of self and produce more stress than one would ordinarily think. Similarly, the arrival of a substitute teacher or caregiver can trigger old feelings about loss and growing up (and the dangers therein), forcing a child back to earlier types of behavior and perhaps early concerns about loss. Reliance on an old transition object or frequent toileting accidents might recur.

To help children handle these normal occurrences, adults must be sensitive to the feelings and stresses that even "good" losses such as a vacation or a birthday can elicit. The losses described in this section are everyday in nature and not as serious as the more significant losses of death or divorce, yet the results still can produce stress in children, depending on their developmental level, previous life experiences, and the attitudes of the adults around them.

Finally, some of the losses in this section are related to new experiences. Whenever children experience something new, it's helpful to prepare them by letting them know exactly what is going to happen. No one likes to be surprised on a regular basis! When children know what to expect, they can give up the familiar more easily than if they are thrust into a new situation with no preparation. The suggested activities can help pave the way for children to come to terms with normal developmental losses. Adults who are attuned to children's feelings and responses will know best how to respond.

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances

A child encounters death in many of his daily experiences. A drive past a cemetery, a visit to a museum, or a Halloween decoration may trigger questions and concerns about the subject and its immediate meaning to the child. Emotional reactions may range from curiosity to genuine anxiety.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances

A child who has discovered the reality or inevitability of death may seem unbearably curious, asking difficult questions and raising the subject at every opportunity. In some cases, the underlying anxiety can cause children to become tense, clingy, and easily upset; or, they may cry for no apparent reason.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents

- what the child saw or heard that seemed to trigger this reaction
- what the child is saying and doing at home
- the specifics of the parents' response to the child

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- staff's perceptions of the child's reaction and its causes
- coping strategy suggestions: reassurance, facts, sensitivity
- reassurance and perspective: the child's reactions may be quite normal

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use

- "You seem really interested in this subject..."
- "It's scary to think about dying..."
- "It's true that everybody will die someday, but you and your parents will be living for a long time."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine

- special plans for times the child finds particularly difficult
- extra availability from staff, in general
- planned one-on-one sessions with the child, to answer questions and provide reassurance
- discuss ways to help the other children understand the child's concerns
- extra sensitivity to the child's issues and reactions

Classroom activity/ experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide concrete experiences with the natural cycle of life and death, and opportunities to confront the fears and anxieties that accompany this information.

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Curriculum Area	
Science	MATERIALS: an assortment of seeds (radish or marigold seeds usually dowell, or look for a commercial "bean sprouting kit"), paper towels, trays, baby food jars, potting ssoil, water. PROCEDURE: Introduce this activity at a group time. Show the seeds to the children and ask if anyone knows what they are. Talk about the fact that seeds are useful as they are (mostly, for eating), and that they are also, in fact, baby plants, from which new plants grow. Finish the discussion by announcing that anyone who wants to can experiment with growing seeds in the science area, during free play period. Assign a caregiver to the science area to work with one small group at a time. On the tray, place several thicknesses of paper towels. Have each child select a few seeds and place them on the towels. When the tray is full, cover the seeds with a few more layers of paper towels, and, with the children's help, pour water into the tray until the towels are thoroughly soaked. Repeat with as many trays as necessary. Add "watering the seeds" to the list of daily chores, and check them every day for signs of sprouting. When they begin to sprout, help the children transplant them into jars of potting soil (the commercial bean sprouts may be eaten at this point), and continue caring for them regularly. Talk about the plants that die; talk also about the normal cycle of a plant's life: growing, bearing fruit, and dying. The children's plants may be taken home, or ultimately planted in a day care garden, where they may be observed and discussed throughout this cycle.
Music/Movement	MATERIALS: dinosaur music, large open floor space PROCEDURE: At a group time in the large space, lead a discussion about dinosaurs: the different kinds, how they looked and moved, what they ate, what sounds they made. Tell the children to close their eyes and think about the kind of dinosaur they want to be. When they hear the music, they can open their eyes and move about in the land of the dinosaurs.
Science	MATERIALS: popsicle sticks, bones (real or pretend), sand tools, paint brushes, "archaeologist outfits" (hats, shirts, etc.) PROCEDURE: This activity is intended to complement a unit on dinosaurs and fossils, or at least a trip to a museum. Before the children arrive, prepare the sand table by burying some bones in the sand, and declaring the area off-limits for regular play. At group time, talk about fossils, dinosaurs, and archaeologists. Tell the group you are going to lead an expedition to the sand table, and ask for volunteers. Issue the costumes and paintbrushes to a small group of children (everyone who wants will get a turn) and begin to work in the sand table. Help the children dig carefully, using their paintbrushes to uncover the bones they find.

Any child who wants to continue the activity can take his bones to a table and make up a story about the "dinosaur" he discovered. Build dinosaurs with mini marshmallows and toothpicks or glue toothpicks on black construction paper.

Science

MATERIALS: pictures of plants in various stages of growth (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources"), mounted on separate cards

PROCEDURE: This is an activity for individual children, or small groups. Present the cards to the interested child, explain the notion of sequence, and asks her to choose the picture that comes first in the life of a plant. Help the child sequence the rest of the pictures. The life *cycle* can be illustrated by having the caregiver choose a picture at random; the rest of the cards will follow in sequence back to the original card (the mature plant produces the seeds which grow into new plants).

Unit 1 *Chapter 2* FAMILY VACATION TRIP

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances

A child who has a vacation to look forward to is likely to be feeling very excited about the upcoming event. She may, on the other hand, be worrying about what she will be missing at school while she is gone. She may also feel anxious about leaving home.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances

The child may be too excited to settle down to classroom activities. She may brag to friends about the upcoming event, especially if the destination is particularly attractive to the other children (e.g., Disney World). This superior attitude may continue for awhile after the child returns from her trip.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- departure and return dates
- what the child knows about the trip
- preparations and travel plans
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom, especially any qualms about the trip the child may have voiced
- ask them to have the child send a postcard to the center while she is away

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "You seem to be excited about this trip."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- assurance that the child is welcome to return after the vacation is over
- permission to take something with her that represents the school
- involvement of the children who aren't going (they may be feeling left out) by having the child share brochures and travel plans and having them share stories about special places they have visited

Classroom activity/ experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help the child prepare emotionally for an approaching trip and feel less anxious about spending time away from his friends at the child care center.

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	Curriculum Area
MATERIALS: "souvenirs" of special times, from home PROCEDURES: This show-and-tell activity begins with a memo asking parents to help their child select an item representing a special place they have visited (vacation souvenirs, cookies they made with Grandma, photos of outings, etc.). At show-and-tell time, give each child a chance to show his "souvenir," and tell about the special time it represents. Talk about the feelings, good and bad, that accompanied these experiences.	*Language Arts*
MATERIALS: suitcase, doll or children's clothing, items that might go in a suitcase (brush, toothpaste, shoes, etc.) and items that would not be packed for a trip PROCEDURE: Place an empty suitcase beside a group of assorted items. Assist the child in deciding whether or not each item belongs in the suitcase (why, or why not?). Help the child pack the suitcase, folding the clothes and arranging the items appropriately.	*Dramatic Play*
MATERIALS: A prop box that contains items related to the trip the child is about to take, i.e., Disney figures, camping gear, beach supplies, etc.) PROCEDURE: Introduce these items at group time by talking about what they are, and what they are used for. Add the new props to the dramatic play area.	*Dramatic Play*
MATERIALS: Sand box or water table, sea shells PROCEDURE: Put the sea shells in the sand or water table, and make a staff person available to respond to the children's reactions. Bring the shells to group time and continue the discussion about these new items, and how the children used them.	*Natural Materials*
MATERIALS: large calendar (may be homemade), pre-cut symbols representing the transportation method(s) the child will use (cars, planes, etc; see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources") PROCEDURE: At group time, place the transportation symbols on the calendar to indicate the days that the child will be absent.	*Language Arts*
MATERIALS: a group photo of the children and staff, cardboard, glue, markers, fabric scraps, scissors PROCEDURE: Cut the cardboard in the shape of a frame for the photo, leaving a 2" border. Allow the child to decorate the frame, using markers and fabric scraps. Help the child tape the picture into the frame from the back. Glue a second piece of cardboard to the back of the frame and photo. This creation is meant to be taken along on the trip, as a reminder of his friends at the child care center.	*Art*

Unit 1 *Chapter 3* HAIRCUT

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances

A child with a new haircut may be suffering a loss of identity, not understanding that her hair will grow back, and that she remains the same person she was before her hair was cut. She may be embarrassed by her different look. She may be angry or upset at her parents, due to feelings of loss of control. Alternatively, a child may be proud of her new haircut and want to "show it off."

The behavior of a child under these circumstances

The child may try to hide her changed appearance by insisting on wearing a hat at all times or by hiding from her classmates and teachers. A boy might exhibit aggressive or hyper-masculine behavior to go with his new look, especially if the haircut is a radical change.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- circumstances around the haircut
- preparation the child was given for the haircut
- child's reaction during and after the haircut

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- feedback about school behavior as related to the situation
- importance of sex roles and stereotypical behavior at preschool ages
- importance of acceptance of child's feeling of loss
- importance of positive feedback to the child concerning her new look

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "It takes time to get used to a big change in the way you look."
- "You're still the same person you were before, and we're still your friends."
- "Your hair will grow back, just like fingernails do."
- "Getting a haircut can make you feel really special."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- allowance of the hat or other hiding behavior
- encouragement of peer support, in order to discourage teasing
- acceptance of child's feelings

PURPOSE: These experiences are designed to help reassure the child that people remain the same even when their outside appearance changes.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: beauty salon/barber props: plastic scissors, cape or towel, spray bottle, mirror, rollers, combs, brushes, hair dryer, etc., wig on stand or doll with hair, large brown grocery bag

PROCEDURE: Place the new props into the grocery bag. At group time, tell the children, "I have a bag of tools that someone uses at their job. We're going to try to guess what the job is." As they take turns pulling the props out of the bag, ask them, "What can you tell me about that?" Accept any answers, such as color, texture or some other characteristic of the object. Provide the correct name and use, if the children can't guess.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: an assortment of masks, wigs, and possibly makeup, full-length mirror.

PROCEDURE: Bring a mask and a wig to group time and ask the children to identify the items. Ask them, "Who will I turn into if I put this wig on?" No matter what they answer, make sure the children understand that wearing a wig or a mask does not change your identity, only your appearance. Demonstrate by trying on the wig, then the mask, then both. Tell the children that you have put out some wigs, masks (and perhaps some other things that change one's appearance), and that they will have a chance during free play to discover how people stay the same despite changes in their appearance. Assign a caregiver to the mask table during free play. This is not a role-play activity; the point is really to emphasize the unchanging identity of the child beneath the mask, etc.

Unit 1 *Chapter 4* LOSS OF TRANSITION OBJECT

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances

A child's attachment to her transition object (usually a favorite blanket, doll, or stuffed animal) can seem mysterious to an adult's rational perceptions. In fact, parents often deliberately "lose" such items, feeling that their child has outgrown it. Adults must recognize that a child in such a situation has experienced a real loss and may react strongly. Children may feel angry or betrayed. They may also feel frightened and insecure, having lost an important "anchor" in their lives. Parents and child care staff members may need help in taking the child's reaction seriously.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances

The most likely behavior under these circumstances will involve the child's feelings of insecurity. They may have more trouble than usual separating in the morning, and they may have a real problems at napcime. Children who are used to reaching for their transition object at stressful times during the day will obviously have a harder time coping in general. If a child is angry about the circumstances, she may resist adult attempesto provide alternative means of support.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- parents' feelings about the child's attachment to her transition object
- details concerning the loss of the transition object
- explanations that have been made to the child
- child's initial reaction
- child's ongoing reaction

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- information about the importance of a transition object, and the depth and appropriateness of a child's attachment to one
- help with identifying a substitute or in developing substitute supportive behavior
- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Tell me how you are feeling right now, without your [blanket]."
- "I bet you must be missing your [blanket]..."
- "Sometimes people can use hugs when they are feeling sad, to help them feel better. Let's try it."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- plan staff sensitivity to the child's increased insecurity
- plan extra staff availability, especially during identified periods of difficulty
- acknowledge the child's feelings and help the rest of the group if necessary
- discuss the favorite objects of the other children

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to sensitize the group—children and staff—to the very real feelings of the child who has lost an important transitional object.

MATERIALS: children's favorite toys or transitional objects (from home)

PROCEDURE: At a large group time, ask the children about their favorite "security items," possessions that help them feel safe in scary or stressful situations. Talk about blankets, dolls, stuffed animals, and about the comfort they provide on trips, at bedtime, at school. Stories about caregivers' favorite objects are particularly engaging and productive. Conclude the discussion by announcing a special "show-and-tell" day, when each child can bring in a special object. Notify parents of this special event.

On the "show-and-tell" day, in addition to a large group sharing time, play the following small group game with children who are interested: Sit in a circle with three or four children. Put the children's transitional objects in the middle of the circle and tell the children to look carefully at the objects. Then ask them to close their eyes while you remove one of the items. Have the children open their eyes and tell you which item is missing and to whom it belonged. When you return the object to the pile, talk about how good it feels to get it back, and how bad a child might feel if he lost a favorite and important possession.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas
Language Arts

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Unit 1 *Chapter 5*

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER (During a temporary absence)

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances

A young child is very possessive of the significant adults in his life. Children usually develop a close relationship with their primary teacher. When that person, for whatever reason, must leave the school, a child finds it difficult to transfer trust and allegiance to a new person. The child is very likely to be sad and angry. He may be feeling abandoned and believe that the teacher's departure is somehow his fault. He may be fearful that other people who are important to him will also leave and that the substitutes will not be able to keep him safe.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances

A child may regress to more infantile behavior. He may withdraw from classroom activities or choose not to participate in play with his friends. He may become defiant or have tantrums when the substitute teacher tries to direct his activities.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- if parents have discussed the situation with him at home and what he has been told
- how the child feels about coming to school

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- news about the substitute to introduce her to the parents
- concrete information about the reasons for and length of the teacher's absence
- strong feelings about the new teacher are to be expected for a period of time

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "We all miss your old teacher. Remember, she will be back in [two weeks]."
- "Let's see what [two weeks] looks like on the calendar."
- "Ms. Jones is your new teacher for [awhile]. She likes children very much, and she will take good care of you."
- "It's hard when someone you care about isn't here. The rest of the teachers are still here, and you can talk to them when you need to."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- encourage children to share their feelings about the absent teacher
- make no other changes (schedule, furniture, etc.) at this time

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help children focus on what they know about the daily routine, and what will remain the same despite the change in caregiving staff.

Classroom activity/ experience	Curriculum Area
MATERIALS: catalog pictures of toys and classroom equipment that illustrate the child's daily schedule (snack, free play, lunch, nap, outdoor, etc.) PROCEDURE: Place the pictures representing the daily routine on a table in random order. Help the children arrange them in the sequence of the familiar classroom routine, either individually or taking turns with a small group.	*Language Arts*
MATERIALS: large calendar; pictures of the absent teacher and of the substitute who is replacing her PROCEDURE: Review with the children the reason for the teacher's absence. Use the calendar to show when she will return and place her picture on the appropriate date. After introducing the substitute teacher, place her picture on today's date. Remind the children that despite the change in caregiver, many things about the classroom (routine and rules) will remain the same. Review the rules and routine. Talk about the absent teacher each day, speculating about where she is and what she is doing. If the absence is due to illness, update the children on her progress.	*Language Arts*
MATERIALS: balls, sand table, jack-in-the box or similar toy PROCEDURE: play with these materials can provide children with an opportunity to control "coming and going": rolling the ball back and forth, burying things in the sand and then finding them, making the clown disappear and reappear from its box, etc.	*Physical*

Unit 1 *Chapter 6* TOILETING ACCIDENTS

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances

A child who wets herself at school is very likely to feel ashamed and out of control. Since staying dry is heralded as a sign of maturity in young children, a child who has an accident may feel she has failed. This is likely to have an effect on her self-esteem. When a child regresses (that is, loses an ability she had clearly mastered) the cause may be relatively simple: a physical problem, for example, or a toileting incident that has triggered a fear reaction. Regression may also be a symptom of some larger emotional difficulty. If this is judged to be the case, it is the job of the caregivers to behave in such a way that this symptom does not itself interfere with the child's primary struggle.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances

The child may withdraw from contact with peers, fearing their reactions. Other children in this situation may become angry and hostile, asserting themselves in inappropriate ways. Children may deny that the event happened or lay the blame on someone else.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- if this is a recurring problem and how they handle it
- if there any changes in the routine at home
- how they feel about toileting accidents in general

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- reassure them that at preschool ages, accidents do happen, especially if the child is stressed or upset
- toileting accidents are often a symptom of a serious but solvable problem
- encourage them to discuss it with their child

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Anyone can have an accident. We just clean things up and go on with something else."
- "Your friends, your teachers, and your mom and dad still think you are great."
- "I know you are upset, but there are better ways to handle those feelings. Let's talk about them."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- if the accidents are a symptom of a deeper difficulty, reminders and attempts to regulate fluid intake are not usually very effective and may actually do more harm than good
- be aware of the possibility of peer teasing
- make sure the child has plenty of dry clothes
- gently insist that the child participate in cleanup and changing clothes
- plan successful, esteem-building experiences for the child
- emphasize the child's strengths and maturity by offering positions of leadership and responsibility

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to foster the child's positive self-concept and self-esteem.

Classroom activity/ experience

Curriculum Area

Art

MATERIALS: markers, very large sheets of paper (four or five feet long x two or three feet wide)

PROCEDURE: At a group time, tell the children, "We're going to decorate our room with life-size drawings of YOU! We're going to make the pictures by drawing around your body as you lie on a big piece of paper." Ask for a volunteer to demonstrate this.

As you begin the demonstration, ask, "What are the parts of your body that we can draw?" Allow the children to name the body parts, as you trace the volunteer. You might sing the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes," adding other body parts to the song.

When the tracing is complete, talk to the children about the parts that are still missing (facial features, hair, clothing and so on.) Ask the children to help you add these features to finish the drawing. End the demonstration by saying, "If you would like to make a picture of yourself, come to the art area during free play time today or tomorrow and a teacher will help you."

Physical

MATERIALS: ball, large floor space

PROCEDURE: Have the children sit in a circle. When the ball is rolled to them they are to respond to the question, "Tell us something you do well." The caregiver then leads the group in using the child's name and repeating what the child is good at. (For example, if the child says he is good at helping his mother fold the laundry, the caregiver would lead the class in saying, "Bobby is good at folding laundry.")

The first child then calls out another name and rolls the ball to that child, repeating

the procedure. Variations of this may include bouncing or tossing the ball, or answering other questions such as "something nice I did for someone" or "my grandmother (mother, father, sister, aunt, friend) likes it when I..."

MATERIALS: large floor space

PROCEDURES: The children hold hands and make a circle around one child who is standing in the center of the group. The children walk around and sing "What can you do Bobby Brown, Bobby Brown, what can you do, Bobby Brown, show us, too." The child moves his body and the children copy his movements chanting, "We can do it too, Bobby Brown, Bobby Brown, we can do it too, Bobby, we can do it too."

Music

MATERIALS: none

PROCEDURE: During a group time use one of the following chants to personally recognize each child:

(to the tune of "Frere Jacques")

Hello, Andy, Hello, Andy,

How are you? How are you?

We are glad to see you, we are glad to see you,

Yes, we are, Yes, we are

Children and adults sing:

Hello Stephan, Hello Stephan, How are you? How are you?

Child responds:

I'm fine, I'm fine, and I hope that you are too

(To the tune of "Mary had a Little Lamb")

Betsy wore her purple pants, purple pants, purple pants

Betsy wore her purple pants to our school today

(to the tune of "Bingo")

There is a child at school today and Lisa is her name, oh, (say letters as you write them on a large paper)

L I S A and Lisa is her name

As a variation, use the tune above and have the children respond by clapping the syllables of their names. Have children identify the names of other children who have the same number of claps as their name.

How did you come to school today, how did you come to school today, How did you come to school?

Billy rode the bus today, Billy rode the bus today.

Group Time

MATERIALS: tape recorder and tape

PROCEDURE: Use the tape recorder to:

- record each child saying his full name and singing a favorite song
- record answers to specific questions such as, "What was something nice you did for someone today" or "What was your favorite activity today?"

Unit 1 *Chapter 7* WINNING AND LOSING

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances

Losing — and winning — at even the most trivial game can deal a serious blow to the self-esteem of a fragile preschooler. Losing can create or emphasize a child's feelings of inadequacy or incompetence. Winning is a more subtle but often powerful type of loss, since it usually involves the defeat of another person. Such a victory can conflict with a child's image of herself as a "good person." She might become frustrated and angry, losing self-confidence and developing a poor self-image. These feelings are complicated by the fact that competitiveness is often related to parental attitudes and behaviors.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances

A child who is experiencing these feelings might tend to withdraw from competitive situations, which could eventually include any group activity. She might display strong animosity towards children perceived as "better," and attempt to undercut their efforts by distracting them, or by minimizing their achievements. Some desperate children resort to outright cheating as a way to lessen their feelings of failure.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- number and ages of siblings
- behavior towards siblings
- family attitude towards competition and failure
- parents' reactions to child's behavior

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- the effect of parental competitiveness on a child's attitudes
- the impact of extreme competitiveness on self-confidence and self-esteem
- ideas for reducing competition at home

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "I really like the way you...."
- "Everybody is good at doing some things, and not so good at doing other things. We're here to help each other get better at the things we don't do so well."

- "You must feel bad about losing [that game]. Losing sure can make you feel bad, but it doesn't mean you're a bad person. I still think you're special."
- "It seems like you think her picture is better than yours, but I don't. It depends on what you like."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- provide open-ended activities, with no specific outcome (i.e., a collage, or a play)
- plan one-on-one activities at which the child will be successful
- find ways to stress the strengths of the child
- assign the child special classroom responsibilities
- provide positive reinforcement frequently and consistently
- be alert for competitive situations and available to the child if she should "lose"

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to foster the child's positive self-concept and self-esteem, independent of her ability to perform certain tasks, by focusing on the child's strengths and the things she can do well.

Classroom activity/ experience

Curriculum Area

Art

MATERIALS: markers, very large sheets of paper (four or five feet long x two or three feet wide)

PROCEDURE: At group time say, "We're going to decorate our room with life-size drawings of the children, and anyone who wants to can make one. We're going to make the pictures by drawing around your body as you lie on a big piece of paper. What are the parts of your body that we will be drawing?" Allow the children to name the body parts and demonstrate the activity by tracing a volunteer caregiver. As you trace, sing the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes," adding other body parts to the song. When the tracing is complete, talk to the children about the parts that are still missing (facial features, hair, clothing, etc.) Ask the children to help you add these features to finish the drawing. Say, "If you would like to make a picture of yourself, come to the art area during free play time today or tomorrow and a teacher will help you."

Language Arts

MATERIALS: old magazines, construction paper, scissors, glue, miscellaneous arts and crafts materials, depending on availability

PROCEDURE: This activity may be offered for a week, or longer, focusing on one page each day. Make a variety of arts and crafts materials available in the art area. Tell the children that they are going to make an "All About Me" book, with pages of personal details such as: handprints, footprints, favorite tastes, other senses, favorite toys, favorite animals, friends, family, physical characteristics, or any other important

topics a child might suggest. Label each page before the child begins to work on it and bind them into a book when she is finished. The child can design her own cover page.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: large poster board, stapler, glue, construction paper, markers, concrete models of classroom chores such as setting the table (paper cups, napkin, plate, utensils), feeding the fish (an empty fish food container), turning out the lights at naptime (an old light switch), etc., pre-cut symbols (one for each child), velcro strips

PROCEDURE: At a group time, ask the children to think of all the chores with which they could help (or are already helping). List the children's answers on a large sheet of paper, and tell the children that they will be a making a chart to help them take turns with these classroom chores.

Gather materials to represent each chore that the children have listed. During free play period, make these materials available in the art area, along with a sheet of poster board large enough to contain the entire list. With the children's help, list the chores; beside each chore attach the visual model. Across the chart from the chore models, attach the velcro strips.

At a later group time, allow each child to select a symbol (shapes, colors, cutouts, etc.). Print the child's name on her symbol, and glue a small piece of velcro to the back. Use the chart to indicate the classroom responsibilities of each child, changing it on a daily or weekly basis as the children take turns with the chores.

Physical

PROCEDURE: Play games that are non-competitive, i.e., that do not stress "winning" and "losing."

Natural Play Materials

PROCEDURE: Encourage the use of materials such as dry sand or water. These do not require the creation of a product which may be compared unfavorably to another child's. The child can choose to play alone, or in a small group.

CHAPTER 1: DEATH AS A PART OF THE LIFE CYCLE

Aliki. (1979). *The Two of Them.* New York: Mulberry Books.

Russell, Naomi. (1989). *The Tree.* New York: Dutton.

Simon, Norma. (1986). *The Saddest Time.* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Stein, Sara. (1974). *About Dying.* New York: Walker.

CHAPTER 2: FAMILY VACATION TRIP

Rogers, Jacqueline. (1989). *Staying with Grandma.* New York: Bradbury.

Rose, Gerald. (1980). *PB Takes a Holiday.* London: William Cowles (Beccles).

CHAPTER 3: HAIRCUT

Davis, Gibbs. (1985). *Katy's First Haircut.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Girard. Linda. (1986). *Jeremy's First Haircut.* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Quin-Harkin, Janet. (1983). *Helpful Hattie.* San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

CHAPTER 4: LOSS OF TRANSITION OBJECT

Douglass, Barbara. (1982). *Good As New.* New York: Mulberry Books.

Graham, Bob. (1987). *The Red Woolen Blanket.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Hughes, Shirley. (1978). *David and Dog.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Johnston, Tony. (1985). *The Quilt Story.* New York: Putnam.

Jonas, Ann. (1986). *Where Can It Be?* New York: Greenwillow.

Obligodo, Lillian. (1962). *Sad Day, Glad Day.* New York: Holiday House.

CHAPTER 5: SUBSTITUTE TEACHER (During a Temporary Absence)

Allard, Harry. (1977). *Miss Nelson is Missing.* New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Howe, James. (1984). *The Day the Teacher Went Bananas.* New York: Dutton.

CHAPTER 6: TOILETING ACCIDENTS

Munsch, Robert. (1987). *I Have to Go!* Willowdale, ONT: Firefly Book.

(Adult Books for Your Convenience)

Azrin, Nathan. (1979). *A Parent's Guide to Bedwetting Control: A Step-by-Step Method.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Mack, Alison. (1989). *Dry All Night.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Welford, Heather. (1987). *Toilet Training and Bed Wetting: A Practical Guide for Today's Parents.* New York: Sterling.

CHAPTER 7: WINNING AND LOSING

Cohen, Miriam. (1988). *It's George.* New York: Greenwillow.

LIFE EXPERIENCE LOSS

UNIT 2

Chapters

1. Body Injury
2. Change in Routine at Home
3. Daylight Savings Time
4. The Death of a Pet
5. Disruption in Classroom Routine
6. Family Foster Care
7. A Friend's Illness
8. A Friend Leaves the Center
9. Leaving the Day Care Center
10. Moving
11. A New baby in the Family
12. Starting Day Care
13. Traveling Parent

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Unit II: Life Experience Losses

As children develop, they learn to deal with the normal everyday losses of growing up. Along with the developmental losses that all children experience, most children will encounter a number of losses that are caused by expectable, normal occurrences. During these stressful times, adults can be especially sensitive to the need for support, understanding, and — most of all — a safe haven for children to express their feelings about loss.

For instance, most children have strong feelings about the arrival of a new baby sister or brother. The birth of a sibling represents a loss in status or family position for most children. Yet in the context of the family, children may be unable to express those feelings — for fear of losing the love and affection of the parents. Insightful caregivers can accept expression of those strong feelings through play sequences that might include spanking a baby doll, simply neglecting the baby doll, or even "doing away" with the doll during a play episode. Non-judgmental responses on the part of the caregiver (as opposed to scolding or reprimanding) allow children to experiment with the pretend consequences of carrying out their angry wishes, without endangering the safety of the real new baby.

Allowing children to pretend about their angry feelings won't increase the chances of their carrying out those actions. If anything, these pretend situations can help reduce the feelings of hostility children experience. Once children can admit that there are disadvantages to this new family constellation, and admit to feelings of competition or at least ambivalence, they are often more able to see the positive side as well. Through their play, they can begin to take on the role of the nurturer who cares for the baby dolls, modeling their behavior after the caregiving exchanges they observe between the parents and the new baby.

If the play becomes so violent that caregivers are truly uncomfortable with the content, play intervention techniques can be used to direct the play toward more nurturing themes. For instance, a child who repeatedly abuses a baby doll (day after day after day) may need adult facilitation to begin to take on the nurturing role. The adult can pretend to be a grandmother who arrives for a visit and models more nurturing behavior by saying, "My goodness, you're angry with that baby. Here, let me hold him for you while you fix his bottle" and then holding and rocking the baby while encouraging the pretend parent to bring a bottle or cook some cereal. Handing the "baby" gently back to the child communicates the notion that babies need gentle loving care much better than a standard "lecture" on how they should treat the new baby.

The teachers might also bring up the topic at group time, talking about what kinds of care new babies need and letting children "hold" an imaginary baby, showing the others how to hold and care for her. These non-judgmental responses help children

acknowledge their feelings about an event while making it clear that there is a difference between real and pretend.

Similar expectable losses include:

- separations from parents upon entrance into child care or school
- separations from parents who are traveling
- the loss of friends as children move away
- moving to a new home

or even the simple modifications in routine that result from schedule or daylight savings time changes. All of these shifts are expectable, and caregivers can help children tremendously if they are aware that their reaction to these losses will vary depending on how successfully they have handled losses in the past, how attached they are to the people from whom they are separated, and the stage of development of the given child.

For many children, the birth of a sibling will have only minor repercussions; for others, the loss in family position can remain a struggle throughout one's lifetime. One of the things that can make a difference is the way that adults respond to the child's expressions of sadness, frustration, irritation, anger, and fear. Helping children acknowledge and express the feelings they do have provides a sense of organization that allows children to move on to acceptance of the loss and a focus on other priorities.

Unit 2 *Chapter 1* BODY INJURY

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

When someone close to a child loses a body part due to illness or accident, the child has great difficulty understanding the reason behind the loss. He may become fearful that he too may lose a part of his body. Older preschoolers, especially boys, are greatly concerned with the "connectedness" of their bodies; sometimes even a doll with a missing limb can trigger feelings of anxiety.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child may become anxious around those who are hurt or ill and withdraw from them. He may hesitate to become involved in normal play activities, for fear of getting hurt. He may exaggerate the seriousness of bumps and scrapes. Children may also act out their anxiety in raucous, silly behavior.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child knows about the situation
- if he has seen the person since the accident/surgery
- the relationship between the child and this person
- the parents' reaction to the situation
- the person's prognosis
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- assurance that body integrity is a normal developmental issue with preschoolers
- connections between the child's behavior and the classroom situation
- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "School is a safe place. We're here to take care of you."
- "Sometimes you are afraid you might lose your [leg], too."
- "When you fall or bump yourself, it's just a little hurt that goes away, and then you will be as good as new."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- sensitivity to the child's feelings, allow him to take things slowly for a while
- reassurance that it won't happen to him

- make a point of being available to listen to his fears
- add materials that include handicapped persons, i.e., dolls, story books, puzzles

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to reinforce a child's sense of body integrity.

Classroom Activity/ Experienece

Curriculum Areas

Language Arts

MATERIALS: an "inset" puzzle of a human figure

PROCEDURE: Find a quiet corner with one or two children who are interested in the activity. With the help of the children, work the puzzle, removing and replacing the pieces slowly and carefully. Use the opportunity to talk about the child's experience with a missing limb, and to reinforce the wholeness of his own body.

Art

MATERIALS: markers, very large sheets of paper (four or five feet long by two or three feet wide)

PROCEDURE: At group time say, "We're going to decorate our room with life-size drawings of the children and anyone who wants to can make one. We're going to make the pictures by drawing around your body as you lie on a big piece of paper. What are the parts of your body that we will be drawing?" Allow the children to name the body parts and demonstrate the activity by tracing a volunteer caregiver. As you trace, sing the song "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes," adding other body parts to the song. When the tracing is complete, talk to the children about the parts that are still missing (facial features, hair, clothing, etc.). Ask the children to help you add these features to finish the drawing. Say, "If you would like to make a picture of yourself, come to the art area during free play time today or tomorrow and a teacher will help you."

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: commercial plastic bandages, cloth bandages, adhesive tape, slings, other bandage-like materials, "doctor" play equipment

PROCEDURE: At a group time, display the bandage materials you have assembled, and ask the children if they have seen any of the items before. The discussion that follows should be lively; give everyone a chance to talk about their experiences. Then ask the group, "What happens to your body underneath a bandage?" Demonstrate the use of the various bandages you brought to the group. Make the point that your arm, finger, leg, or whatever remains intact under the bandage while the wound heals. Allow a few children to try the bandages at the end of group time, and tell the children that the materials will be available in the housekeeping area during free play. Plan on leaving the items out for several days, for use in conjunction with the doctor play equipment, until the children's interest has clearly died down.

Unit 2 *Chapter 2* CHANGE IN ROUTINE AT HOME

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

When the routine at home is altered by an element such as a change in a parent's work schedule, it can have unexpected consequences. If the child has less time to spend with that parent, she may feel resentful and angry. The change itself may create feelings of confusion, disorientation, and insecurity. The family's ability to adjust to the new routine will determine the level of impact on the child.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child may become more dependent upon the available parent or caregiver. She may also experience a lapse in self-control, or become more demanding of adult attention. She may react more strongly than usual to transitions, and to people coming and going. The child may experience the reduction of time spent with her parent as rejection and may express resentment in angry outbursts or by ignoring the less available parent.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- the details of the change
- what the child is saying and doing at home
- response from child when both parents are more available
- special activities planned to make up for change

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- methods for helping the child cope with the change in her home life
- the importance of dealing with the child's feelings

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "It must be hard when you don't get to see your [parent] as much as you used to."
- "Are there any special times when the whole family has a chance to do special things together?"
- "Moms and dads don't always get to pick the hours they want to work at their jobs."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- arrange for child to have special time with a trusted caregiver
- channel rebellious and angry feelings into acceptable outlets

- reassure child that parent misses the time they used to have together, too

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to maintain the child's positive perception of her family when the roles and responsibilities of individual members have changed.

MATERIALS: flannelboard, yarn, scissors, glue, cardboard, felt cutouts of family members (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources), magazine pictures of family activities (chosen by specific child: bedtime, dinner time, bath time, playing, shopping, etc.)

PROCEDURE: Look through magazines with the child for pictures that represent her routine family activities. Help the child cut them out, mount them on cardboard, and glue pieces of felt to the backs. When the pictures are ready, arrange them in a column on one side of the flannelboard. Allow the child to select flannel figures that represent her family, and arrange these in a second column, on the other side of the flannelboard. Choose one of the family figures and ask the child, "Which of these activities does [grandma] usually help you with?" Help the child use the yarn to connect the family figure with one or more appropriate activities. Discuss the ways adult roles have changed in her family (i.e., her mother used to give her a bath, but now grandma does).

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Language Arts

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

The loss or gain of an hour a day may seem a little thing to adults, but anything that upsets a child's normal routine is likely to cause confusion in his mind. Also, biological rhythms are upset until the body gets used to the change, and children may react strongly, feeling tired, cranky, and restless

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

A child is likely to be listless or cranky, especially at the institution of daylight savings time in April. The disruption of their normal visual cues of light and dark may cause sleep disturbances. They may become angry when things do not happen when they should, e.g. darkness falling before a parent comes to pick them up or having to go to bed while it is still daylight.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- any discussions they may have had with their child about time change

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- assurance that the child's crankiness or confusion is normal (they, too, are probably feeling it without realizing it) and should soon pass
- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Isn't it interesting that the sun knows exactly how long to shine every day?"
- "There are things in every season that are fun to do. Let's talk about winter and summer fun."
- "You feel tired because we lost an hour on Sunday, but we'll get it back next fall at Halloween time. Won't that be nice?"

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- prepare the children for the time change by showing them what to expect
- read stories about the seasons
- be tolerant of listlessness for a few days

Classroom Activity/ Experience

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to reassure children that their parents still pick them up at the same time even though it looks like night time (later) outside.

MATERIALS: a real clock, 12 1/2" x 18" inch sheet of white paper, crayons (yellow, gray, black, and white), ruler, marker

PROCEDURE: This activity should be started a few days before daylight savings time ends. Tell the children that during the next week you will help them make a chart showing the color of the sky at 5:00 pm. Divide the paper into seven columns. At the top of each column print the days of the week and a clock face that shows 5:00.

On the first day point out the time on the real clock and announce that it is time to go outside and make their observations about the sky. Ask the children which color of crayon best represents the sky (this should be blue or yellow). Back in the classroom, allow one or more children to color the column below the first day. Repeat this procedure on the second day, pointing out that the clock shows the same time as yesterday. Continue this ritual for a week, with daylight savings time ending somewhere in the middle. On this day, the column will be colored black, and the change will be dramatic. Talk about how the clock time has remained the same, even though the sky is now dark. Post the chart near the clock or a window, and discuss it as needed until the children have adjusted to the difference in the late afternoon light. If possible, save the chart, and compare it with another one made in the spring. Talk about how afternoon activities change because it gets dark earlier.

THE DEATH OF A PET

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child who loses a cherished pet will certainly be feeling sad and confused. The possibility exists that he will also feel guilty, because of something he did, real or imagined, which caused the death of the animal. He may feel anxious and vulnerable; if this is his first experience with death, he may realize for the first time that people also die. He may fear for the loss of his parents, or be anxious about his own death.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child might exhibit sleep disturbances or suddenly need to sleep with a light on. Some children withdraw from activities, preferring to be alone; others seem to need company at all times. He may have difficulty at naptime and with separations. Guilt feelings may cause him to be overly critical of himself.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- any discussions they may have had with their child about time change

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- assurance that the child's reactions are normal
- resources for themselves and/or the child to help deal with the loss
- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom and how the caregivers are dealing with it

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "You must be feeling sad because your pet died."
- "Your pet didn't die because of something you did or thought. Your pet was very sick (had a bad accident), and that is why it died."
- "You don't need to worry about your mom or dad dying for a very long time. People are different from animals."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- allowance of a period of grieving
- acceptance of the child's needs: extra attention, a need to withdraw from activities for a short while, etc.
- awareness that children often engage in "magical thinking," that a thought or wish may have caused the pet's death to occur

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide the child with an outlet for feelings associated with death. Mastery is achieved by confronting and acknowledging painful emotions. Also, the death of an animal introduces a child to the concept of the life cycle.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: stuffed animals (from home), pet care supplies (comb, brush, food dishes, etc.), prizes (ribbons or trophies), blocks, boxes, or crates

PROCEDURE: At a group time, ask the children if they know what a pet show is. Using their replies, develop the concept of a pet show as an opportunity for people to show off their pets and how much they love them. Explain that, while it is impossible to have a pet show with real animals in the classroom, those children who are interested could bring in their favorite stuffed animals for a show. Talk about care, grooming, and prizes, explaining that in the Stuffed Animal Pet Show, everyone wins a prize. Choose a date and notify parents of the plans. Allow several days to collect the animals and house them in a "kennel" area made from blocks, crates, or boxes. Use group times to discuss the care of each animal, and ways to make it look its best for the show.

On the day of the show, make sure you have extra animals available for children who did not bring any from home. Use free play period to prepare the animals for the show, brushing, grooming, decorating, etc. When all the animals are ready, have a group judging. Award a prize to each animal with the help of the children, making up categories such as "longest fur," "pointiest ears," etc. At a final group time, talk about the feelings evoked by the activity, e.g., nervousness, love, pride. Discuss how these feelings apply to caring for and about a real animal.

Dramatic Plays

MATERIALS: stuffed animals from home, "doctor play" materials

PROCEDURE: At a group time, ask the children, "Who takes care of animals who are hurt or get sick?" Using their replies, and the doctor play materials, discuss veterinarians and the work they do. Explain that you will help the children set up an animal hospital during free play, if they are interested. If this activity follows the "Pet Show" described above, they may use their own animals as the patients. Otherwise, make plenty of toy animals available from the center supplies. Assign a staff member to the hospital play area, to organize the play and perhaps to talk about what happens when a veterinarian cannot help an animal. This topic might be discussed again at group time, if the children seem interested.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: magazine pictures of animals at various ages, cut out and mounted on small cardboard squares

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PROCEDURE: Introduce the animal pictures at a group time, holding them up one by one and asking the children to tell you the age of each animal: baby, child, grownup, and possibly old grownup. Make the pictures available in the table area for various matching and sequencing activities. One-on-one or in small groups, discuss aging and death as the normal and natural end point of the process illustrated by the sequenced pictures.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: Book, *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* (see Bibliography of Children's Books)

PROCEDURE: At group time, read *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney* to the children. Initiate a discussion about their pets, asking if anyone ever had a pet that died. Listen carefully to the stories, then ask about the feelings associated with the animal's death. Assure them that most times when an animal dies, it is nature taking its course. No one is at fault. Refer back to the story that was read earlier and ask the children what good things they remember about their pet.

Art

MATERIALS: 18" x 24" sheets of newsprint folded to make books, crayons, markers, pictures of pets cut from magazines, wallpaper sample books, or construction paper

PROCEDURE: Tell the children that they will be making a book about their pet, like the one about Barney you just read. Ask them to think about funny things their pet does or did, what it likes to eat and play with, where it sleeps. Give each child a newsprint book and tell them they may draw pictures or cut some from the magazines. Have them dictate a sentence or two as a caption for each picture. When the book is completed, help the children make covers out of construction paper or a wallpaper sample. The children can share their books with one another, if they want to, or may add them to the classroom library. Some will prefer to take their books home.

DISRUPTION IN CLASSROOM ROUTINE

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

When a routine to which children are accustomed is altered, there are apt to be a variety of responses. The familiarity and predictability of the daily schedule is a powerful source of comfort and security for young children; therefore, changes create anxiety and a feeling of being out of control. In addition, some children are particularly fearful about new situations. The excitement children feel when a field trip or a visitor disrupts their familiar day is usually tinged with this anxiety.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Children act out this anxiety in a variety of ways. Some become anxious and clingy, refusing to participate in the activities. Others may have difficulty settling down before, during, and after the disruption. They may appear hyperactive, acting out their out-of-control feelings by testing the boundaries, asking for more control from the caregivers. They may talk about the event for days afterward and include it in their imaginative play.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- the child's normal reactions to changes
- any similar experiences the child has had
- techniques they use to calm the child when he is overexcited
- any methods they have used to reassure the anxious child

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- date, time, and specifics of the event
- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom, before and after the event
- any brochures or handouts received so that parent and child can discuss the event at home

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "I know things are different today, but we'll have a good time, and we'll keep you safe as we always do."
- "If you would like to come closer to get a better look, I will go with you."
- "We need to sit quietly for a minute to calm down. Let's talk about what we did and saw today."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- prepare the children with precise details of the coming event
- discuss the event in terms of the normal daily routine (i.e. "Instead of morning snack, we'll have a picnic," or "after breakfast we won't have free play; instead we'll...")
- reassurance; the ability of the grownups to keep them safe and under control
- calming and soothing activities
- discussion and activities related to the experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help a child focus on what he knows about the daily routine and what will remain the same despite other changes in the schedule.

Classroom activity/ experience	Curriculum Areas
	Language Arts

MATERIALS: catalog pictures of toys and classroom equipment that can be used to illustrate the classroom routine, pictures or symbols to represent the change in the schedule (i.e. birthday party, guest presenter, field trip, etc.), long sheet of paper (or several stapled together), paste, marker

PROCEDURE: Place the normal classroom routine pictures on a table in random order. Help the children to arrange them in the sequence of the familiar classroom routine, either individually or taking turns in a small group. Help the children paste the picture sequence in order on the long paper. Under each picture label the event (free play, snack, outdoor play, lunch, nap, etc.).

Paste the picture representing the special activity on a separate sheet of paper. Fasten the "special activity page" to the regular routine schedule in such a way that it can be lifted to show the normal activity underneath. Review the new sequence with the children.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: pictures portraying the special event that will take place, a symbol of the special event, calendar

PROCEDURE: Use the pictures to discuss the special event that will take place. Reassure the children that, although some things will change, the classroom rules will be the same and the teachers will be there to keep them safe. The symbol can be fastened to the calendar and used as a concrete reference for the children as they mark off the days.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: large paper, marker

PROCEDURE: After the special event, review with the children what took place. Write their names and their comments on a large sheet of paper and post it in the classroom for parents to read.

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Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

When a family enlarges itself for any reason, the system is stressed. The way a preschooler feels when a foster child is accepted resembles the reaction when a sibling is added under more "normal" circumstances. One significant difference is the child's concerns about whereabouts of the foster sibling's birth parents and the implications of this for his own situation. Feelings of jealousy, anger, resentment, frustration, and even depression are to be expected. The circumstances of the foster placement can contribute to strong feelings of displacement, causing the child to suffer a drop in self-esteem and self-confidence.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Children in this situation often regress, and begin to display behavior they have already "outgrown." They may experience lapses in toileting, difficulty in separating, shortened attention span, and trouble at nap time. A lower tolerance for disruption and even routine change is also quite common. Some children may act out, in an attempt to get some special attention and improve their self-image. Others may withdraw from their normal activity and from the others in the classroom.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- background information on the foster child(ren): sex, age, circumstances, length of stay
- information on family routines, sleeping arrangements
- information the child has been given; preparation
- changes in child's behavior at home
- parents' responses to child's home behavior

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- reassurance: child's reaction is expected and normal
- information about child's classroom behavior
- information about resources (books, support groups, etc.)

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "It must be hard to have to share [your parents, house, room, toys, etc.] with your new foster [sibling]."
- "People sometimes have accidents when they have a lot on their minds."
- "We will all help you feel better about yourself, and remember the things you know about taking care of yourself."

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- "You are still a special person, no matter how many children are living in your house."
- "Soon you'll be feeling better, and then there won't be so many [regressive incidents]."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- staff acceptance of regressive behavior
- promise and plan for extra individual attention: one-on-one time for playing or talking
- plans for extra holding, rocking, etc. especially at difficult times of the day
- discussion and comparison of different types of families

Classroom activity/ experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help a child focus on the consistent elements of his life and on the caretaking efforts of his family.

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: Family doll house, paper, markers, tape

PROCEDURE: Find an interlude when you can spend some individual time with the child. Tell him that you are interested in learning more about his new family and get out the doll house and equipment. Help the child set up the furniture in the family doll house in a fashion similar to his own home. Ask the child, "Where do you sleep?"; write his name on a slip of paper, and tape it to the bed in "his" room. Continue with other appropriate questions such as: "Where do you keep your toys?"; "Where do you sit at meal times?"; and so on. Label the appropriate item or locations with the child's name. At the conclusion of the activity, tell the child how proud you are of his ability to understand and share all of this information. You may want to ask the child's parents to help him label his real-life space.

Art

MATERIALS: Crayons, paper, scissors, and pictures representing activities such as: bedtime, mealtimes, playtime, food shopping, cutting the grass, washing dishes, washing clothes, and any other household chores (the pictures should portray a mixture of fathers, mothers, and siblings doing these chores; the "playtime" pictures should include a mother and child, father and child, both parents and child, siblings with child)

PROCEDURE: This is an individual or small group activity. Start by asking the child to tell you what is happening in each picture. As you go through the pictures, place them in a vertical row down one side of the table. Then, ask the child to draw the members of his family. Label each figure, and cut them out so they are like paper dolls. Help the child place the figures across the top of the table, and return to the pictures. Help the child sort the pictures according to the responsibilities of the adults, by asking: "Who cooks dinner in your house? Who plays with you?", etc. Place each picture under an appropriate adult.

A FRIEND'S ILLNESS

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child may personalize the situation and worry about contracting the illness himself. He may also view the illness as a punishment for the other child's misbehavior and worry that his own transgressions will bring about a similar fate. He may even imagine himself responsible in some way for his friend's illness, feeling guilty as a result.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

In some cases, children shy away from an ill child, especially one who looks different because of the illness or its treatment. In other cases, children may ask insensitive questions about the illness. Children may even be cruel to the afflicted child, if he or she looks or acts unusual.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- what they are telling the child in answer to his questions
- what their feelings are about the illness

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- their child's reaction to the ill child
- reference materials that discuss differences in people and how to help children deal with them
- information (that does not violate the ill child's privacy) about the illness

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "You seem worried about (child's name), because she has been sick. But her doctor and mom and dad are taking care of her."
- "We will help you stay well."
- "Sometimes people feel strange around someone who is sick, but [he or she] is still the same person and needs you for a friend."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- give reassurance to the child about behavior not being a cause of illness
- offer specific information about the illness and stress that the child is unlikely to become ill with the disease himself
- include the ill child as much as possible in daily activities

Classroom activity/ experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to engage the ill child in normal individual and group interactions, confronting the children's fears of contagion and strangeness, and reinforcing the child's acceptance as a valuable and functioning member of the class. Group acceptance of children who look unusual or who are physically limited is also addressed.

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: props for doctor or hospital play, including white smocks, stethoscope, bandages, crutches, tongue depressors, pretend medicine, commercial "doctor kit"

PROCEDURE: At a group time, introduce the new doctor play props by holding up each item and asking the children to tell you what it is used for. Encourage them to tell you stories about their own experiences with these items. Tell the group that you want to set up a play hospital and ask for suggestions as to where it could be located in the classroom and what should be included. During free-play period, meet with the interested children, plan the new hospital play area, and set it up according to the plans you help them devise. Assign a caregiver to monitor the hospital area, helping the children focus their play, and bringing any difficult or scary issues back to the next group time for general discussion.

Physical

MATERIALS: large open area, children's group games such as London Bridge, Ring Around the Rosie, etc.

PROCEDURE: Play the games as usual, making a point of casually including the ill child. If anyone is reluctant to hold hands with the ill child, don't press; the example you set by comfortably taking the child's hand yourself is the best way to deliver your message.

If the ill child is physically unable to participate in these games, start with a discussion at a group time. Ask the ill child to talk as best she can about the things she can and can't do. Ask the group to help you think of ways to adapt the circle games so that everyone can participate (this discussion might include a mention of the "environmental access" features with which children are usually familiar: wheelchair ramps on sidewalks, handicapped parking spaces, special toilets in rest rooms, etc.) Play the new games, then gather again in a group and talk about how it felt.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: an assortment of masks, wigs, and possibly makeup, full-length mirror.

PROCEDURE: Bring a mask and a wig to group time and ask the children to identify the items. Ask them, "Who will I turn into if I put this wig on?" No matter what they answer, make sure the children understand that wearing a wig or a mask does not

change your identity, only your appearance. Demonstrate by trying on the wig, then the mask, then both. Tell the children that you have put out some wigs, masks (and perhaps some other things that change one's appearance), and that they will have a chance during free play to discover how people stay the same despite changes in their appearance. Assign a caregiver to the mask table during free play. This is not a role-play activity; the point is really to emphasize the unchanging identity of the child beneath the mask.

Unit 2 *Chapter 8*

A FRIEND LEAVES THE CENTER

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child whose friend is leaving may be afraid that he won't find another friend. He may be confused, angry, and sad. He may also feel guilty, if he believes that his behavior is somehow responsible for the separation.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child may have difficulty trusting others and allowing them to become close, because of his fear of losing another friend. He may become withdrawn and depressed, refusing to play with the other children. He may take his anger out on the friend who is leaving.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the parents know about the other child's move and what they are telling their child about it
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- ways to help the friends stay in touch
- how to reassure their child that he will make other friends
- suggestions for books on moving

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "We'll miss you, but we'll stay in touch. You can come see us or call when you want."
- "I know you can do the things that the teachers at your new center have planned."
- "They have the same kinds of things we do here - a block area, a housekeeping corner, a playground."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- acknowledgement of the child's feelings of divided loyalties
- encouragement to think positively about the change
- time to disengage

Classroom Activity/ Experience

PURPOSE: This activity is designed to help the child acknowledge the grief that accompanies the departure of a special friend and to support the understanding that "life goes on," despite such a loss.

MATERIALS: construction paper, markers or crayons, scissors, glue, paint, old magazines for pictures, a photograph of the two friends together

PROCEDURE: During free play, sit down with the friends in a quiet corner and talk about the coming separation. Suggest that, since they have such a special friendship, they might like to work on a project that will help them remember each other and the fun they had together. Present the idea of a pair of books, one for each of them, entitled "My Friend and Me." Help the friends think about the content of such a book: drawings or magazine pictures of things they like, activities they have enjoyed together, favorite colors, toys, and teachers, etc. Take two photos of them together, one for each book. Move to the art area and help them get started. Each child could make a paint handprint for the other's book, and each child should dictate captions for the pictures they choose. Addresses and telephone numbers could be included, if available. The project may take several days; when all the pages are finished, staple or bind them together and attach the photograph. The books could be exchanged on the children's final day together, as a part of their farewell to each other.

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LEAVING THE DAY CARE CENTER

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child whose parents decide to enroll her in another child care center might be feeling a loss of control, especially if she has established a feeling of closeness to one or more of her caregivers. She may be feeling sad, confused, and afraid of the unknown situation she is confronting. There may also be feelings of rejection, compounded by the suspicion that her own bad behavior is somehow responsible for the change. responsible for the separation.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child may make negative statements about the center, or behave in a defiant and aggressive manner toward her caregivers. These behaviors are especially likely if the change is being made because the parents are dissatisfied with some aspect of the program. The child may withdraw from contact and refuse to take part in activities.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- the reason for the change
- specifics of the new setting to help prepare the child for the change
- if there is a problem, how it could be corrected (better communication of the program's philosophy to parents, standardized exit questions, to help staff avoid this problem in the future)

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- ways to help the friends stay in touch
- how to reassure their child that he will make other friends
- suggestions for books on moving

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "We'll miss you, but we'll stay in touch. You can come see us or call when you want."
- "I know you can do the things that the teachers at your new center have planned."
- "They have the same kinds of things we do here - a block area, a housekeeping corner, a playground."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- acknowledgement of the child's feelings of divided loyalties
- encouragement to think positively about the change
- time to disengage

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to smooth the child's transition out of a familiar child care center.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Art

MATERIALS: fabric paint, white undershirt (size to fit child who is leaving) pencil, box, gift wrap, and ribbon

PROCEDURE: Talk to the children about the classmate who is leaving at a group time a week or so before the child's final day. Be as specific as you can about why she is leaving, where she is going, and what kind of contact (if any) might be expected with her following her departure. Talk about the feelings of the child who is leaving and the feelings of those who are being left. Allow the group plenty of time to ask their own questions about this event. Watch for an opportunity to talk about the value of objects, things which can accompany a person to a new place which remind them of their old friends. When the discussion seems to be over, tell the children that they will have a chance to make a very special goodbye present for their friend during free play time in the art area.

In the art area, help each child use the pencil to trace his or her handprint on the shirt. Then, using the fabric paint, outline each handprint. Each child's name may also be written inside their handprint. The activity may be expanded by helping the children create special wrapping paper and preparing the shirt as a going-away present.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: several snapshots of the child playing in the classroom, outdoors and on field trips, construction paper, stapler, magic markers, hole punch, and ribbon to bind the book

PROCEDURES: This scrapbook can be made over a period of two weeks. Collect pictures of the child at play and have other children make drawings for the book. One page can include comments from the child's friends about good times they have shared. Help the child who is leaving design a cover page and put the book together by punching holes and using the ribbon to hold the pages together.

Following the scrapbook activity, at a group time, lead a discussion about children's experiences with people leaving, and being left. Talk about the feelings these experiences cause (e.g., sometimes people feel sad and glad at the same time). Help the child who is leaving to share her scrapbook with the group.

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

When a child must leave a familiar place to move to a new home, he may become very insecure. There is a feeling of anxiety because of the disruption of the normal routine, and children can feel very much out-of-control. The parents' feelings about the move, if positive, may be in conflict with the child's grief and anxiety. Therefore, a child may be confused and guilty about these negative feelings.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child may need someone near him in the home until he becomes used to the surroundings. He may have difficulty sleeping at first, especially if the bedroom accommodations are different from what they were at his previous home. The feelings of instability may make the child moody; he may cling more to a favorite teacher. He may have difficulty separating from parents when they leave him at school, or reuniting with them at the end of the day. Children who are not comfortable with their anxious feelings may attempt to mask them, seeming too cheerful and excited.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- specifics about move and house: timing, address, phone number, etc.
- what the child is saying and doing at home
- what parents have done to ease transition

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- reassure parents that child clinging to the familiar is normal
- ways to involve the child in the move to help him feel more in control
- importance of maintaining (as nearly as possible) familiar objects and routines in the new home, at least in the beginning

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "I hear your new house is very pretty. What do you like best about it?"
- "It's hard to leave a house that you've lived in a long time. Maybe you can go back and visit your friends there sometime."
- "Even though you are in a new house, you will still come here to school like you always have."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- keep classroom setting and routine consistent

- do not separate the child from his close friends
- discuss the positive side of the move while acknowledging the child's reservations

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide the child with concrete experiences and information about moving that will ease feelings of anxiety and insecurity.

Classroom Activity/ Experienece

Curriculum Areas

Art

MATERIALS: large box, paint, knife

PROCEDURE: Tell the children who are interested that you will be making a moving van. Begin the activity with a discussion about moving vans: what are they for? What do they look like? What are the parts of a moving van (wheels, doors, windows?). Next, develop a plan to carry out the work: What materials will be needed (box, knife, paint, pencil, markers?) Who will do what tasks? Finally, transform the box into a moving van, allowing as much creativity and flexibility as possible. When the paint is dry (probably the next day), use the moving van for the following activity.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: "moving van" from activity above, several small boxes which can be packed into the moving van, marker, housekeeping equipment such as clothes and dishes, classroom toys, newspaper

PROCEDURE: This activity is designed to follow the making of a moving van (above). Ask the child who is moving if he has helped at home with any of the packing. Listen to the information he presents, and use it to shape the activity.

Say to the child, "We are going to pretend we are moving. What will we need to help us pack our things?" Together, bring the boxes and newspaper to the chosen area. Ask the child, "If we were to start in the kitchen, what do you think we would pack? Would we need newspaper to wrap any items? Why?" Help the child pack the housekeeping items and then work on other rooms and other items, using his experience as a guide. Label the boxes appropriately, and show the child how to pack the small boxes into the "moving van."

Language Arts

MATERIALS: pictures of household items (furniture, dishes, clothes, toys, appliances; see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources"), moving van pattern, glue or paste, stapler

PROCEDURE: Look through the pictures with the child who is moving, and select items that would be moved in the van. Help identify each picture selected, and glue it onto the van pattern. The child may draw boxes on the van pattern to paste the pictures into.

Art

MATERIALS: children's gift wrap, medium-size box, scissors, tape, paper, pen

PROCEDURE: Help the child make a special box to pack his things in for the move. Tell him to think about what may fit into the this box and write down the items. This list can be taped to the outside of the box.

MATERIALS: medium-size box, knife, contact or gift wrap paper, scissors, tape

PROCEDURE: Tell the child who is moving that you are going to help him make a book shelf for his new home.

Cut out the front panel of the box, leaving about a 2" lip at the bottom. Next cut the sides out at an angle, so you have a triangle left on each side. Cover the box with contact paper or gift wrap and label it with the child's first and last name. You may want to purchase a book about moving for the child to take home with the bookshelf.

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: Family doll house, small boxes, large truck, cars, building blocks

PROCEDURE: Make the family doll house available for free play time. An adult can help the child make a plan that includes using the blocks to build a new house. Then allow the child to pack and move the contents of the family doll house to the new block house. Unload the furniture and set up the new house.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: telephone pattern, house pattern (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources"), magic marker, crayons

PROCEDURE: For children who show an interest in writing numbers and letters, use the patterns to help the child to print his new phone number on the phone pattern and the new address on the house pattern. The child can color the pattern.

Physical

MATERIAL: any nesting toys

PROCEDURE: During free choice time make these types of toys available for the child, to help him understand the packing and unpacking that accompanies a move.

A NEW BABY IN THE FAMILY

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

The child with a new baby at home may be feeling jealous, angry, frightened, and displaced. In addition to these negative feelings, there may be some ambivalence; the child may have positive feelings about being a big sister (or brother) and about helping with the baby's care.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child may not want to come to school and cry or cling to the parent upon departure. She may become bossy with other children, or demanding and whiny with adults. Regressive behavior, such as toilet training lapses or thumb sucking, may become apparent.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- anyone new at home (e.g. Grandma)
- things the child had to give up to accommodate the new baby (e.g. bedroom, furniture, etc.)
- changes in routine

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom, both positive and stressful reactions
- recommendations of books, both for parent and child
- reassurance that the child's behavior is normal and that acceptance of his/her feelings is important

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "How do you feel about having a baby brother (sister)?"
- "Babies cry a lot. Does your baby wake you up at night?"
- "Babies need lots of help from grown ups, but kids can help too. How do you help with your new baby?"
- "Babies don't have words like you do, so they cry to tell mom what they want. What are some things your baby needs and cries for?"
- "You will always be part of your family: the big sister [brother]. Parents have plenty of love for more than one child."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- adults need to be available for extra attention

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- provide play materials such as baby dolls, bottles, diapers
- provide opportunities for the child to feel special
- encourage peer support
- the other children may want to make cards for the new big brother or sister as congratulations
- the teacher might wish to purchase a small gift

Classroom Activity/ Experiences

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide the child with an opportunity to confront and explore her feelings of jealousy and displacement. They will help her gain an understanding of the change in her special relationship with her parents, and focus on developing a relationship with her new sibling.

Curriculum Areas

Art

MATERIALS: magazine pictures of parents doing a variety of activities with infants: feeding, bathing, rocking, carrying, diapering, etc.; pictures of parents and preschool children doing things together: playing outdoors, performing household chores, shopping, having dinner, going to the zoo, etc.; large sheets of paper; scissors; glue

PROCEDURE: During free play period, sit with the child in a quiet corner. Display the magazine pictures, and help her sort them into two groups: parents with babies and parents with older children. Talk about the fact that babies are totally helpless and need to have everything done for them. Then point out how older children and parents get to do many things together that babies cannot and that parents show their love for their children in many different ways.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: have children bring in from home snapshots of the child at different stages in her life; large sheet of paper; crayon or marker

PROCEDURE: Ask the child and her parents to bring to class a selection of photographs (5-10) that illustrate the stages of the child's growth and the history of the family. When the photos have been collected, choose a time during free play period to sit with the child in a quiet corner. Look at all the pictures with the child, naming the people and talking about the things that are happening. When each picture has been discussed, develop a time line of the child's life by drawing a line across a large sheet of paper and arranging the pictures along it in appropriate order. Encourage the child to dictate a sentence or two to go along with the stages of her life, highlighting her achievements at each stage. Focus on the skills she has learned since babyhood. Emphasize how her parents spent time with her as an infant, and how she has gained a measure of independence from them as she has grown. The timeline may be preserved, if the photographs aren't too precious to fasten to the paper. Alternatively, the exercise can be repeated as a game, wherein the child fits the photos into the spaces outlined during this first session.

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Dramatic play

MATERIALS: infant equipment, such as:

baby dolls	high chair	diaper
infant seat	bottles	car seat
baby toys	crib or cradle	blanket

PROCEDURE: At a group time, present the new infant-play props, asking the children if they know how each item is used. This should lead to an enthusiastic discussion about babies and their characteristics. Conclude by telling the children that these props will be available in the appropriate area (housekeeping or dress-up).

During free-play period, assign a staff member to the dramatic play area. The children will probably need very little encouragement to "play parent"; some will take advantage of the opportunity to "play baby." The caregiver may offer suggestions and information, focusing on the feelings elicited by the various roles. The child who has a new sibling may actually practice some skills needed to help her parents with a little brother or sister.

Art

MATERIALS: ice cream tub; yogurt carton; pictures of babies cut from magazines or old greeting cards; paste or glue; disposable diapers; cotton swabs

PROCEDURE: At an appropriate time, suggest the idea of making a special container for some of the baby's things (i.e. diapers, cotton swabs, pins, bibs). During free play time, present the craft materials and encourage any child in the group to participate. Allow the group to design a storage container by covering either the ice cream tub or yogurt carton with pictures of babies, collage-style. Emphasize the "grown-up" skills and abilities required to complete this task. When finished, fill the container with the appropriate items, and help the child present it—proudly—to her parents.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: magazine pictures of babies and preschool-age children engaged in a variety of activities

PROCEDURE: Work with a group of two or three children. Mix the pictures up in a display on a table and allow the children to take turns choosing a picture and describing the activity. Finally, sort the pictures into two categories: things babies can, and can't, do.

Language Arts

PROCEDURE: Give the children some direct experience with an infant by asking the mother to bring her new baby for a visit. This same purpose can also be accomplished with video footage of the new baby at home.

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STARTING DAY CARE

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child may be feeling conflicting emotions when starting in day care. On one hand, she may feel fearful or anxious. She may feel anger at her parents, thinking that they are putting her in care in order to "get her out of the way." She may also be excited at the prospect of beginning day care, seeing it as a sign that she is growing up.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

A child may cling to the parent who brings her to school. She may be reluctant to let the parent leave. Once she is on her own, she may be reluctant or cautious about taking part in classroom activities. Some children may display false bravado by leaping into everything and find it difficult to settle on one activity. Children who seem to accept the change readily at first may have a stronger reaction after six weeks or two months, when the reality of the situation is unavoidable.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- the child's previous child care situation
- parents' feelings about the situation, family circumstances, and need for child care
- the child's developmental history
- what the parent has been telling the child about the child care experience
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- the different coping styles of children to new situations
- encourage them to stress positive aspects of the program to the child
- the progress the child is making in adjusting

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "It's a little scary to start school. We'll take good care of you. We're glad you're here."
- "The teachers here really like to be with children."
- "We have lots of things for you to do. You may choose what you would like."
- "Right now, you don't like very much about this center—and that's OK. We'll still take good care of you."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- encourage parent to stay for a short time for a few days
- allow transition object as needed: photos, keys, or whatever works for the child
- make teacher(s) available for comforting when the child expresses a need
- allow the child to express bad feelings or attitudes without adult "correction"

Purpose: These activities are designed to help familiarize children with the daily routine of the child care program, to support in making an adjustment to the child care center, and to help the children understand that, in new situations, feelings of anxiety are normal.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Language Arts

MATERIALS: five round paper plates, crayons or markers, one large sheet of paper

PROCEDURE: At a group time, lead a discussion with the children about how people usually feel in new situations and about how they each felt during their first days at the child care center. If they need prompting, the teacher can suggest feelings such as: excited, fearful, unsafe, insecure, let down, resentful, uncertain, or punished. Then, using the paper plates, draw "feeling faces" that represent the emotions reported by the group.

Discuss some ways children express their feelings, prompting again if necessary with examples such as: get angry and yell, stay close to an adult, ask questions, cry, suck thumb, have bathroom accidents, cling to parent in morning, don't want to leave when parents return at the end of the day, don't want to play or try new things. Finally, talk about the new child in the class and ask for suggestions from the children on ways to make their new classmates feel more comfortable, safe, and secure. List the children's responses on the large sheet of paper.

Save the "feeling faces" for the following activity.

Physical

MATERIALS: "feeling faces" made during the group time activity (see above), bean bags, large floor space

PROCEDURE: Introduce the activity, and take the interested children to an large empty area of the room. Spread the "feeling faces" out on the floor. Help the children take turns tossing a bean bag onto a feeling face and identifying the selected feeling. Then, ask the child to suggest something that could help a person who feels this way (for example, if the child's bean bag lands on the angry face, the child would identify the emotion "angry" or "mad," and might suggest that an angry person could pound

clay, draw a mad picture, play an angry song on the drum, or talk to a grownup about his or her feelings).

Art

MATERIALS: shoe box, stickers, gift wrap, magic markers, glue, photograph of the child's family, brought from home

PROCEDURE: This box will be a place for the child to keep personal belongings. Introduce the activity at a group time and make it available as a choice in the art area during free-play time. Begin by helping the child cover the shoe box with the gift wrap. Allow the child to use markers and the stickers to decorate and personalize his or her box. Label the box with the child's first and last name, using upper and lowercase letters. Finally, place the family picture inside the box or attach it to the outside.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: catalog pictures of toys and classroom equipment that illustrate the classroom daily routine (free choice, snack time, rest time, lunch, etc.), 8 1/2" x 11" paper, paste or glue, hole punch, ribbon

PROCEDURE: Set aside a time for a one-on-one activity with the new child alone or with a potential friend or two. Place the pictures representing the daily routine on a table in random order. Help the children remember the daily routine and to arrange the pictures accordingly. Tell the new child to paste the first picture on a page, and then ask her what she likes to do at this time. Prompt if necessary with suggestions focusing on what or who she played with, or would like to play with. Print this information at the bottom of the page.

Continue this process, using all of the pictures (the whole project may take several days). Finally, help the child choose a title and make a cover for her book. Punch holes along the left side, and use the ribbon to bind the pages together. The book may go into the reading corner, the child's "cubby," or home to her parents.

Natural Materials and Blocks

MATERIALS: Water table, sand table, play dough, blocks

PROCEDURE: Make these materials available for a child to use, when she chooses to do so. When using these usually-familiar materials, a child can feel in control of her environment. They also meet other needs: the child is likely to feel safe with them, as they provide non-threatening, successful experiences. Using these materials, a child can play independently, yet still observe her classmates; this allows her to maintain her group participation at a comfortable level.

Water Table: water may have a calming effect on the child. The opportunity to play in water outside of a bath may be an attractive and novel experience.

Sand Table: the child can hide and find objects in the sand, reminding herself

that things and people disappear and reappear. In addition, sand lends itself to imaginative uses.

Play Dough: pounding on play dough may help a child release angry feelings. It also provides a creative outlet for a child's imagination.

Block Building: a child can use blocks to create familiar objects: roads, tunnels, bridges, houses. By adding cars and trucks, she can act out her "coming and going" to and from the center.

TRAVELING PARENT

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child whose parents travel may be upset and confused by the change in routine. Young children can feel abandoned and fearful that their parents will not return. The child whose parents frequently travel may have an easier time adjusting because through previous experience, he knows they will be coming home. A child might also be feeling left out of the fun and excitement of the parent's trip.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Teachers may find that the child clings more to adults, especially at transition times. He may regress to younger behaviors. He may have eating or sleeping problems and trouble with goodbyes and hellos.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- who is traveling (one or both parents?)
- the schedule and length of the trip
- the child's caretaker
- who will be picking the child up
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- how they can provide consistency for child when they are away
- the importance of regular communication while they are traveling

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "I think you might be missing your [mom and/or dad], but I know your [grandma] is taking good care of you."
- "We can look at the calendar and count how many days until [he/she/they] will be home."
- "Tell me about the special things you are doing while [mom and/or dad] are away."
- "How do you think your [mom and/or dad] is feeling about being away from you? I'll bet they miss you, too..."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- offer special reassurance, especially at naptime or upon arrival
- encourage child to express his feelings

- discuss parents' trips with class

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide concrete experiences that will help the child understand the details of, and manage his feelings about, the temporary absence of a parent.

Classroom activity/ experience

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: suitcase, clothing, items that might go in a suitcase (brush, toothpaste, shoes, etc.) and items that would not be packed for a trip

PROCEDURE: Place an empty suitcase beside a group of assorted items. Assist the child in deciding whether or not each item belongs in the suitcase (why, or why not?). Help the child pack the suitcase, folding the clothes and arranging the items appropriately. Leave the suitcase and the travel items in the dramatic play area for use during free play.

Art

MATERIALS: construction paper, crayons or markers, large calendar, pictures of vehicles used by parent (plane, car, train, etc.; see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources)

PROCEDURE: This is a one-on-one activity, to be presented a few days before the parent's trip. Start by helping the child draw two pictures of the traveling parent and one of himself. On the calendar, locate the important dates: today's date, the date of parent's departure, and the date of the parent's return. Attach one drawing of the parent and a vehicle picture to the calendar on the departure date. On the return date, attach the second picture of the parent and the child's drawing of himself. Use the calendar to count off the days before the trip and the days that the parent is absent. Small pictures of telephones could be used to indicate the days when the parent will call; other vehicles can be used to show different stages of the parent's travels.

Unit 2 LIFE EXPERIENCE LOSS

CHAPTER 1: CHANGE IN ROUTINE AT HOME

Berenstain, Stan and Jan. (1984). *The Berenstain Bears and Mama's New Job.* New York: Random.

Blaine, Marge. (1980). *The Terrible Thing that Happened at Our House.* New York: MacMillan.

Delton, Judy. (1980). *My Mother Lost Her Job Today.* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Maury, Inez. (1978). *My Mother and I are Growing Strong.* Berkeley, CA: New Seed.

Simon, Norma. (1975). *All Kinds of Families.* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Whitmore-Hickman, Martha. (1990). *When Andy's Father Went to Prison.* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Whitmore-Hickman, Martha. (1983). *When Can Daddy Come Home?* Jenkintown, PA: Abingdon.

CHAPTER 2: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Heilderwick, Mairi. (1989). *P.D. Pickle's Summer or Winter Book.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Rockwell, Anne. (1985). *First Comes Spring.* New York: Crowell.

Rockwell, Anne. (1987). *Bear Child's Book of Hours.* New York: Crowell.

Spohn, Kate. (1989). *Clementine's Winter Wardrobe.* New York: Orchard.

CHAPTER 3: THE DEATH OF A PET

Brown, Margaret. (1965). *The Dead Bird.* Reading, MA: Young Scott Books.

Carrick, Carol. (1976). *The Accident.* New York: Clarion.

Carrick, Carol. (1977). *The Foundling.* New York: Clarion.

Caree, Denys. (1987). *A Fish in His Pocket.* New York: Orchard.

Cohen, Miriam. (1984). *Jim's Dog Muffins.* New York: Dell.

Hurd, Edith. (1980). *The Black Dog Who Went Into the Woods.* New York: Harper.

Keller, Holly. (1987). *Goodbye Max.* New York: Greenwillow.

Ross, Max. (1976). *When Lucy Went Away.* New York: Dutton.

Viorst, Judith. (1977). *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney.* New York: Atheneum.

Warburg, Sandol. (1975). *Growing Time.* New York: Houghton, Mifflin.

CHAPTER 4: DISRUPTION IN CLASSROOM ROUTINE

(See Unit 2, Chapter 1)

CHAPTER 5: FAMILY FOSTER CARE

MacLachlan, Patricia. (1982). *Mama One, Mama Two.* New York: Harper.

Pieppras, Ruth. (1979). *My Name is Mike Trumsky.* Elgin, IL: Child's World.

Stanek, Muriel. (1981). *My Little Foster Sister.* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Steptoe, John. (1969). *Stevie.* New York: Harper.

CHAPTER 6: A FRIEND'S ILLNESS

(See Unit 2, Chapter 7 for children's books about friendship)

CHAPTER 7: A FRIEND LEAVES THE CENTER

Brenner, Barbara. (1975). *Cunningham's Reunion*. New York: Parents Magazine Press.

Costa, Marcia and Reardon, Maureen. (1974). *Feelings Between Friends*. New York: Raintree.

Viorst, Judith. (1974). *Rosie and Michael*. New York: Atheneum.

Waber, Bernard. (1988). *Ira Says Goodbye*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Zolotow, Charlotte. (1973). *Janey*. New York: Harper.

CHAPTER 8: LEAVING THE DAY CARE CENTER

(See Unit 2, Chapters 10 and 12 and Unit 3, Chapter 3)

CHAPTER 9: INJURY

Brain, Elizabeth. (1978). *One Day I Closed My Eyes and The World Disappeared*. New York: Dial.

Peterson, Jeanne. (1977). *I Have a Sister, My Sister is Deaf*. New York Harper Trophy.

Stein, Sara. (1974). *About Handicaps: An Open Book for Parents and Children Together*. New York: Walker.

Wolf, Angelika. (1969). *Marvel I Broke My Arm*. Batavia, IL: Lion.

CHAPTER 10: MOVING

Asch, Frank. (1986). *Goodbye House*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Obligado, Lillian. (1962). *Sad Day, Glad Day*. New York: Holiday House.

Rogers, Fred. (1987). *Moving*. New York: Putnam.

CHAPTER 11: A NEW BABY IN THE FAMILY

Alexander, Martha. (1971). *Nobody Asked Me If I Wanted a Baby Sister*. New York: Dial.

Alexander, Martha. (1979). *When the New Baby Comes, I'm Moving Out*. New York: Dial.

Byars, Betsy. (1971). *Go and Hush the Baby*. New York: Viking

Hines, Anna. (1989). *Big Like Me*. New York: Greenwillow.

Hoban, Russell. (1964). *A Baby Sister for Frances*. New York: Harper.

Holland, Viki. (1972). *We Are Having a Baby*. New York: Scribner.

Jonas, Ann. (1982). *When You Were a Baby*. New York: Greenwillow.

Stein, Sara. (1974). *That New Baby: An Open Family Book for Parents and Children Together*. New York: Walker.

CHAPTER 12: STARTING DAY CARE

Cohen, Miriam. (1967). *Will I Have a Friend*. New York: MacMillan.

Cooke, Tom. (1987). *Grover and the New Kid*. New York: Random.

Hazenwood, Lucille. (1982). *Dog Goes to Nursery School* (A Golden Book). Racine, WI: Western.

Krementz, Jill. (1986). *Katherine Goes to Nursery School.* New York: Random.

Merriam, Eve. (1989). *Mommies At Work.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Mitchell, Joyce. (1984). *My Mommy Makes Money.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Rogers, Fred. (1985). *Going to Day Care.* New York: Putnam.

Rogers, Fred. (1987). *Making Friends.* New York: Putnam.

Tester, Sylvia. (1979). *We Laughed a Lot, My First Day of School.* Chicago: Children's Press. (Also in Spanish).

Tompert, Ann. (1988). *Will You Come Back For Me?* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Tyler, Linda. (1987). *Waiting For Mom.* New York: Viking.

CHAPTER 13: TRAVELING PARENT

Bauer, Caroline. (1981). *My Mom Travels a Lot.* New York: Frederick Warne.

Singelton-Preston, Joan. (1987). *My Parents Go On a Trip.* Los Angeles: Price, Stein, Sloan.

Sonneborn, Ruth. (1987). *Friday Night is Papa Night.* New York: Penguin.

TRAUMATIC LOSS

UNIT 3

Chapters

1. Becoming a Step Family
2. Exposure to TV Violence or Scary Programs
3. Going to the Hospital
4. Hospitalization of Family Member
5. Lost of Property
6. News Report of Disaster
7. Separation and/or Divorce
8. Shared Custody
9. A Teacher Leaves the Center

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There are other, more serious losses experienced by many children that disrupt their lives to an extent that adults must intervene. For many children, these events might include an extended (or even brief) hospitalization, the separation or divorce of parents, the remarriage of a parent and the possibility of inheriting a step family, the hospitalization of a family member, loss of property through a robbery, or even the indirect experience of loss associated with viewing television violence or a national disaster.

In such situations, caregivers will probably want additional information from the parents: How is the child handling this loss at home? What exactly is the situation? What resolution do the parents expect? How are they explaining the situation to the child? Introducing activities to children should focus on ways that children can begin to master the situation, and probably on helping children realize that they are not to blame for hospitalizations, separations, or violent events—no matter how angry or "bad" they happen to have been.

Whenever the event affects the entire group, caregivers can consider revamping the environment somewhat to allow children to play out fears and concerns. For instance, a number of years ago a space shuttle exploded on live TV in front of millions of young children. Following that event, teachers found that children benefitted from having space props introduced into the classroom. Rockets, shuttles, toy astronauts, and dramatic play costumes allowed children to play about what they had seen on television, thus opening the door to later conversation about the event at group time.

Over a period of weeks, children began to express concerns about their own safety and the safety of their teachers (you'll remember that Christine McAuliffe was a teacher). For instance, one child became very upset when his teacher went to Florida for a conference, asking questions such as "What if you don't come back?" Another child had difficulty accepting his parent's upcoming business trip and played out the anxieties through repeated take-offs and landings with the toy airplanes. By encouraging and allowing play about this traumatic event, adults were able to understand children's fears, help clarify them, and thus allow them to participate in the national mourning period that followed.

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

At first, when two families blend into one, a child may have unrealistic expectations about the new relationships. This often happens because the natural parent emphasizes the advantages of having a new sibling and a new mom or dad. It can therefore be doubly disappointing when the normal irritations of adjusting to one another's ways appear. A child may be in conflict because of angry feelings during this time when others are telling him that he should be happy. The child will certainly experience jealousy about having to share his parent, although he may express it in terms of his belongings. If the children must share a room, that can cause further complications. In addition, if the step parent has different philosophies on child rearing, the child may be quite confused.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

The child may become very demanding of his natural parent, viewing both the stepparent and siblings as competitors. He may regress to more babyish behavior in an attempt to recapture the sense of security he had in infancy. His feelings of confusion and anger may result in displays of temper which seem out of proportion to the incident that seemingly triggered them. If he has difficulty sharing his belongings, his parents may see it as mere selfishness; he is likely to view it as a form of self-preservation.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- the circumstances of the change
- what the child is saying and doing at home
- the new living arrangements; what family members are now living in the home?
- the reactions of all concerned to the family's new status

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom, and how the caregivers are dealing with it
- suggestions for resources in helping parents and children adjust to their new family
- assurances that the adjustment process is normal and should be handled in a sensitive manner

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "You seem to be angry at _____. Do you want to talk about it?"
- "It's hard, even at a happy time, to adjust to new people in your family."
- "Your mom (dad) loves you just as much as she did before even though there are other people in your family now."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- short term allowance for a child's inability to share
- maintaining consistency and stability in the daily routine
- recognition that the child may need some time alone with a trusted adult

Classroom Activity/ Experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help the child confront and acknowledge negative feelings about his new situation without being made to feel guilty about them. Additionally, he can be helped to find the realistic positive side of membership in a new family.

Curriculum Areas

Language Arts

MATERIALS: flannel board, pictures of individual adults and children (see end of chapter), cardboard, and flannel to mount pictures

PROCEDURE: In advance, mount the pictures on cardboard and back them with flannel scraps for use on a flannel board. To do the activity, plan a quiet period when a teacher and the child can be together and uninterrupted. Lay the flannel board people on the table or floor so the child can see all of them at the same time. Introduce the activity by asking the child to select adults and children that could be a family; put them on the flannel board. Note whether the child's flannel board family represents his new family, his old family, or another configuration.

Ask the child to describe some things this family likes to do together, and act out the suggestions using the flannelboard figures. For example, if the child suggests, "This family likes to visit the zoo," act out a zoo trip. How do they get there? What do they see? Do they have something to eat?

When the first idea is exhausted, ask the child if there is another family he can make with the flannelboard people; create one together, if necessary. Discuss the differences. Ask what this second family likes to do together, and again dramatize the child's suggestions. Make the point that different families can still share good times together. The child may be able to discuss real life experiences, or talk about the way he wishes things were.

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Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: dress-up props for adult and child family roles, family housekeeping props

PROCEDURE: Provide time for you and the child to be in the housekeeping area. Help the child select a role for you from among his family members and with the child himself, act out a short scene. You may need to make suggestions to get things going, e.g., "It's dinnertime. What are each family member's jobs? Who cooks, sets the table, clears the table, washes the dishes?" Or, "It's bed time. What will the child do first?" Help the child to act out his own routine, or one that he would prefer. Talk about the differences, and about the changes.

Art

MATERIALS: drawing paper, crayons or markers

PROCEDURE: A child who is comfortable with artistic expression may prefer to draw pictures of his old family and his new family for comparison and display.

Unit 3 *Chapter 2*

EXPOSURE TO TV VIOLENCE OR SCARY PROGRAMS

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

Exposure to violence on television can cause children to lose their sense of safety, security, and control. A range of feelings might result: fear (for the child's own safety, and of his own loss of control), anger, and anxiety.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Exposure to TV violence might make younger children seem anxious, withdrawn, and clingy. They might experience some sleep disturbances, and some problems with separations and reunions. Older preschoolers might behave in an especially aggressive way, in an attempt to demonstrate their own strength and invulnerability. These children might act out the violent scenes they have witnessed.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- specifics of the TV experience
- information the child has been given
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- suggest a discussion about the facts of the situation, in language the child can understand
- acknowledge parents' own feelings about fighting and violence
- encourage discussion of child's feelings
- offer reassurance about the child's safety
- report on the child's behavior in the classroom

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Tell me what you saw on TV last night? Why do you think that happened?"
- "That will never happen here [to you]..."
- "We're learning to use words now, so that when we grow up, we won't have to fight to solve problems."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- staff support for, and supervision of, superhero play
- encourage discussion of feelings and facts
- help the child understand adults' violent behavior in terms of his or her own angry, hostile feelings
- offer verbal reassurance regarding the child's own safety

- promise, and plan for, staff availability to the child
- plan for extra physical contact (e.g., lap time) at difficult periods

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide a safe, supportive environment in which the child may confront and master the feelings triggered by TV violence.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: Figures that represent popular television characters or themes (superheroes, Wizard of Oz, policemen, military, etc), blocks, vehicles, buildings, and/ or other play props (children may bring these from home)

PROCEDURE: Bring some action figures to a large group time, and tell the children that they will be available in the block area. Lead a discussion about action figures and popular TV characters. Ask the children open ended questions about these characters, such as:

- Are they real?
- How do they behave on TV, and can real people actually do those things?
- Do people really solve problems by using violent behavior?
- Is this a good idea?
- Are there some other ways to solve problems?
- How do you feel when you are watching these shows?

Listen to the children's answers, which will probably focus on the more aggressive actions. Then ask the group to think about other things these characters do on TV: eating, sleeping, dancing, singing, etc. Conclude by helping the children generate a list of rules for the use of action figures in the classroom (limited to a specific area, a specific number of children, and to play that is purposeful and has a story-like structure.)

During free play, assign a caregiver to the block area. Meet with a small group of 3 or 4 interested children in the area and discuss the story they want to act out with the figures (stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end). Allow the children to act out their story, using the figures and any other props they may need. Observe carefully, and provide support as necessary.

Music

MATERIALS: a record of music from the movie, "The Wizard of Oz," record player, crepe paper streamers (one or two per child)

PROCEDURE: Choose two contrasting selections from the record; one that is quiet and soothing (such as "Over the Rainbow") to represent Dorothy, and a more dramatic piece to represent the Wicked Witch. Play the music at group time, and ask

the children which character each selection represents. Play guessing games with the music, until the children can identify the contrasts. Then, ask the group, "Can you use your streamer to move like Dorothy?" Play the music that represents Dorothy, and allow the children to move freely. Repeat with the "Wicked Witch" music. Finish by playing the guessing game again with the children using their streamers to identify the music.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: coloring book pictures of TV action characters, cardboard, glue, crayons, scissors, markers, felt

PROCEDURE: In the art area, help the children cut out their favorite TV action characters from coloring books, and glue them to cardboard. Back the cardboard characters with felt. Refer to the procedures under Dramatic Play (above), to implement a flannelboard activity.

Art

MATERIALS: newspaper, construction paper, fabric, string or yarn, glue, paste, stapler, markers, crayons, scissors

PROCEDURE: Items such as capes, masks, wristbands, hats, etc. can be made by the children. These props can be used in the housekeeping area, where the children can act out stories themselves.

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child who needs to be hospitalized will experience a great deal of fear. There are three main sources of this feeling: the child's fear of being separated from his parents; the child's fear of the unknown; and the child's fear of his own illness, and possible death.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Children who are coping with such intense fear may display a variety of reactions. They may experience severe anxiety during any separation or change, even those that are quite familiar. Alternatively, they may engage in outright denial, presenting an outwardly calm appearance and resisting any attempts to discuss the experience. In either situation, teachers may observe regressive behavior, such as toileting accidents, appetite changes, withdrawal from classroom activities, and a generally low tolerance for frustration.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- the details of the hospitalization: when, where, why, and how long
- likely outcomes of the procedure; expectations for recovery
- parents' plans to spend time with the child in the hospital
- child's medical experiences so far
- preparation the child will receive
- ways to keep in touch during child's absence
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- support and reassurance, especially regarding the child's reactions
- reports on staff plans to help the child
- resources: books, professionals, support groups

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Let's talk about your visit to the hospital... [prompt for details]."
- "Let's make a list of all the things you will bring to the hospital with you..."
- "Let's mark all these important days on the calendar."
- "You seem pretty scared about all of this..."
- "All the grownups in your life care a lot about you, and will keep you safe."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- plan extra one-on-one time with the child, for hugging, lap sitting, and other types of reassuring physical contact.
- plan extra staff support for difficult periods during the day
- plan group-time discussions of the situation
- be open and honest with all of the children, whenever the subject comes up
- use other children's experiences when possible
- make necessary allowances for the child's physical condition, before and after the hospitalization

Classroom Activity/ Experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help the child understand the hospitalization experience, and manage the fears that accompany it.

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: props for doctor or hospital play, including white smocks, stethoscope, bandages, crutches, tongue depressors, pretend medicine, commercial "doctor kit"

PROCEDURE: At a group time, introduce the new doctor play props by holding up each item and asking the children to tell you what it is used for. Encourage them to tell you stories about their own experiences with these items, and with doctors in general. Tell the group that you want to set up a play hospital, and ask for suggestions as to where it could be located in the classroom and what should be included. During free-play period, meet with the interested children, plan the new hospital play area, and set it up according to the plans you help them devise.

Assign a caregiver to monitor the hospital area, helping the children focus their play, and bringing any difficult or scary issues back to the next group time for general discussion.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: mounted for flannelboard use: large pictures of the child care center and the hospital; smaller pictures of objects from both places, e.g. table, chair, bed, TV, hospital equipment, curtains, toys, pajamas and clothing, food, utensils, toys, books (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources)

PROCEDURE: Sit down in a quiet corner with the child who is going into the hospital. One or two of his friends may be included in the activity. Place the large representations of the two buildings at the top of the flannelboard, and keep the smaller pictures mixed in a pile. Explain to the child that, while there are many things in a hospital that are different from the things he knows from the child care center,

there are also many familiar items. Select an example from the pile of small pictures, and ask the child if it belongs to the hospital, the center, or both. Place the picture under the appropriate location, creating a third column for things that belong in both places. Proceed through the pile of pictures, taking time to discuss any unfamiliar items, clear up any misunderstandings, and deal with the anxiety this activity might trigger.

MATERIALS: large

Language Arts

PROCEDURE: Sit down in a quiet corner with the child who is going into the hospital. One or two of his friends may be included in the activity. Place the large representations of the two buildings at the top of the flannelboard, and keep the smaller pictures mixed in a pile. Explain to the child that, while there are many things in a hospital that are different from the things he knows from the child care center, there are also many familiar items. Select an example from the pile of small pictures, and ask the child if it belongs to the hospital, the center, or both. Place the picture under the appropriate location, creating a third column for things that belong in both places. Proceed through the pile of pictures, taking time to discuss any unfamiliar items, clear up any misunderstandings, and deal with the anxiety this activity might trigger.

MATERIALS: large calendar, pictures or representations of: the child, the hospital, and his home (see end of chapter)

Language Arts

PROCEDURE: Sit down in a quiet corner with the child who is going into the hospital. One or two of his friends may be included in the activity. Go over the calendar with the child, making sure he has at least a basic understanding of the concept. Help him identify the important dates of his hospitalization, and attach to the calendar: his picture (at the top), pictures of the hospital (on the days of the hospital stay), and a picture of home (on the day of discharge). Point out today's date; count the days until the hospitalization, and the days of the actual stay. Use the calendar daily to help the child understand and manage the timing of this stressful event. The calendar may also be used with the rest of the group during their classmate's absence.

Unit 3 *Chapter 4*

HOSPITALIZATION OF FAMILY MEMBER

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A hospitalization combines many factors that may be stressful for young children. These may include the immediate loss of a significant person, anxiety about the illness and recovery, and the reactions of the other family members. Children under these circumstances may appear scared, uncertain, or tentative. Angry feelings may be openly expressed, or buried by denial.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Children who do not become more aggressive and hostile may display the opposite behavior, withdrawing and disconnecting. These variations may appear in the same child, sometimes within the same day. Separations may be more difficult than usual, and there may be sleep disturbances. Children may demand more attention from adults, becoming clingy or whiny. Some children may ask difficult questions at every opportunity.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- relationship of hospitalized person to the child
- quality of the relationship; ways the child interacted with the adult before the illness
- information the child has received
- changes in family routine
- opportunities for child to visit hospital
- changes in child's home behavior

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- child's behavior in the classroom
- reassurance and perspective; child's reaction may be perfectly normal
- help with explaining the facts of the situation
- resource recommendations: books, support groups, etc.

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "You must really miss your [family member]."
- "The doctors are taking care of [family member], and we are helping."
- "We will not forget to take care of you, and keep you safe."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- make staff allowances for child's increased need for attention and support
- emphasize physical availability, i.e., holding, rocking, or just frequent touching
- make special arrangements for difficult times (morning separation, evening reunion, naptime, mealtime, etc.)
- offer specific information about the illness in question, and stress that the child will be kept safe from it
- consider ways to explain the situation to the other children, possibly enlisting them as additional sources of support

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help a child understand the meaning of a family member's hospitalization, and to confront and accept the feelings such an experience produces.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: props for doctor or hospital play, including white smocks, stethoscope, bandages, crutches, tongue depressors, pretend medicine, commercial "doctor kit"

PROCEDURE: At a group time, introduce the new doctor play props by holding up each item and asking the children to tell you what it is used for. Encourage them to tell you stories about their own experiences with these items, and with doctors in general. Tell the group that you want to set up a play hospital, and ask for suggestions as to where it could be located in the classroom and what should be included. During free-play period, meet with the interested children, plan the new hospital play area, and set it up according to the plans you help them devise.

Assign a caregiver to monitor the hospital area, helping the children focus their play, and bringing any difficult or scary issues back to the next group time for general discussion.

Art

MATERIALS: construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons, markers, and\or paint, fabric, paper scraps, stickers

PROCEDURE: At a group time, talk with the children about the hospitalization of their classmate's family member. Be as informative as possible about the nature of the hospitalization, and the feelings of the people involved. Ask the group to think of ways to help these people feel better; eventually, someone will suggest a "get-well" card. Tell the children that the art area is set up to make cards, for anyone who is interested. During free-play period, help the children make and decorate cards, and dictate

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messages to their classmate's hospitalized relative. Collect the cards, and, at a group time, present them to the child for delivery to his relative.

Language Arts, Math

MATERIALS: large calendar, pictures or representations of: hospitalized relative, hospital, and home

PROCEDURE: Sit down in a quiet corner with the child whose family member is going into the hospital. One or two of his friends may be included in the activity. Go over the calendar with the child, making sure he has at least a basic understanding of the concept. Help him identify the important dates of his relative's hospitalization, and attach to the calendar: a picture of the person (at the top), pictures of the hospital (on the days of the hospital stay), and a picture of home (on the day of discharge). Point out today's date; count the days until the hospitalization, and the days of the actual stay. Use the calendar daily to help the child understand and manage the timing of this stressful event.

Physical

MATERIALS: balls, sand table, jack-in-the box or similar toy

PROCEDURE: play with these materials can be used to provide children with an opportunity to control "coming and going": rolling the ball back and forth, burying things in the sand and then finding them, making the clown disappear and reappear from its box, etc.

LOSS OF PROPERTY

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child whose home has been robbed, or who has had something stolen, will react with feelings of fear and vulnerability. The issue usually generalizes to fears about personal safety and fears about the safety of the child's parents. Another common emotional reaction is that of anger, towards the robber and towards the adults who failed to keep the child's possessions safe.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Children in such a situation may express their anger in open hostility towards teachers, peers, and strangers. They may also withdraw from active participation in the classroom, clinging to the reassurance of a familiar teacher or interest area. Separation difficulties reflect children's fears for their parents' safety. Children may also show an increased attachment to their belongings, needing to keep them near at all times. Sometimes, children will hide themselves or their possessions, trying to avoid the bad guys.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what actually happened
- parents' explanations and reactions to the incident
- initial reaction of the child: fears and fantasies
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- perspective on children's normal reactions to such a situation
- help parents with their own fears or denial

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "How did it make you feel when...?"
- "It *is* wrong to take other people's things; we're teaching you that here at school. Grownups don't always follow the rules, and it makes us feel sad and mad."
- "There are lots of people who are working very hard to make sure that nothing happens to you: policemen, teachers, parents..."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- carefully planned explanations of the robbery incident; may include the whole group

- steady reassurance of the staff's ability to keep the child safe
- staff reactions tailored to the child's observed behavior (i.e., don't overreact. The fears are real, and everyone just learns to live with them.)

Classroom activity/ experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to reduce a child's feelings of vulnerability, focusing on the ways that people in his life work to keep him safe.

Curriculum Areas

Art

MATERIALS: Shoe box, construction paper, other materials to decorate the box

PROCEDURE: Find a quiet time to talk to the child directly. Tell the child that you are going to help him make a special box to keep his belongings in when he comes to school. Suggest that the box be made small, so that he will be able to carry it with him if he wants to. Help the child decide how to decorate the box and provide assistance as necessary. Finish by labeling the box with the child's name.

Science

MATERIALS: locks (different kinds, that can be secured to a piece of wood), wood scraps, screwdriver, drill, hammer and nails

PROCEDURE: At a group time, show the unattached locks to the children, and ask if anyone recognizes them. The discussion that follows will probably cover various aspects of security, theft prevention, and the reasons for putting locks on doors. Suggest that children who are interested could learn to install the locks in the woodworking area during free play period. Assign a staff member to the woodworking area, to help the children attach the locks to the pieces of wood. Discuss the different kinds of locks and what they are used for. Allow the child to work with the different locks, opening and closing them.

Science, Language Arts

MATERIALS: Pictures of things with a lock (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources)

PROCEDURE: Sit with the child individually, or with a small group of children. Show the pictures one by one, and ask: "Have you ever used a lock like this? What are they used for?" Use the children's answers to help extend their knowledge about locks.

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: props for policeman play

PROCEDURE: At a group time, lead a short discussion about ways that we keep things safe: locking our car, locking the door to the house, etc. Ask the children, "Who keeps you safe? They may suggest parents, teachers, or special friends. Point out that the job of the police is to keep us safe. Introduce the policeman props to the children and tell them they will be available in the dramatic play area.

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

The events to which children are exposed through the modern news media can be as disturbing and frightening as direct experiences. Images of a disaster such as a severe flood can make children feel insecure, vulnerable, and quite fearful for their own safety and that of their family.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Children who are struggling with these feelings of vulnerability may display overt fearfulness of new experiences or of familiar experiences that resemble the television images. Less direct expressions may include general anxiety, "clinginess," difficulty with goodbyes and hellos, or sleep disturbances.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child actually saw
- what the child is saying and doing at home
- what the child been told about his or her experience
- how the parents are dealing with the symptoms of the child's anxiety

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- suggest that parents discuss the reality of the news report, including chances of child actually experiencing such a disaster
- suggest a discussion focusing on the grownups' ability to keep the child safe in the event of a disaster

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Your house is too high up on the hill for the water to ever reach."
- "Your mom and dad know what to do and how to keep you—and themselves—safe in a storm."
- "It's scary when you have a bad dream, but it helps to remember that dreams are not real."
- "Your teachers know how to keep you safe, too, and if you ever feel frightened you can come and sit on my lap for awhile."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- consider the secondary effects of the child's anxiety (i.e., is he or she getting enough sleep?)

- encourage discussion of the incident that is causing the anxiety
- maintain a totally calm and reassuring attitude
- convey absolute confidence in the adults' ability to keep the child safe
- encourage the use of a transitional or security object, brought from home
- allow extra time for holding or rocking the child, especially during rest time
- promise, and then plan for, the steady availability of a staff member
- think of concrete ways the children can help the disaster victims (i.e., send food, clothing etc.)

Classroom Activity/ Experience

PURPOSE: These experiences are designed to provide a safe supportive environment in which the child may confront and master the feelings triggered by news of a natural disaster, such as a tornado, flood, or earthquake.

Curriculum Areas

Language Arts

(NEWS OF A TORNADO)

MATERIALS: Pictures of a windmill, sailboats, kite flying, bubble blowing, laundry hanging on a clothes-line outdoors, a tornado (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources;" a model may be used for some of the items, such as a toy sail boat, real bubbles, or a kite)

PROCEDURE: Begin the activity at a group time by asking the children to identify each item or picture, except the tornado. Ask the children to tell you about personal experiences they have had with blowing bubbles, sailboats, and other items in the group. Some children may not know what a windmill is, or may not have seen clothes hanging on a line.

Help the group to think about these things by revealing that they all have something in common. Ask, "How are they the same? What does a kite need to fly? How do you make bubbles?" When air or wind has been identified as the common factor, focus the discussion on all of the good things the wind is used for. Next ask the group if they saw the TV news story about the tornado. Listen to the children's interpretation of the event. Clarify any misperceptions.

Continue the discussion by asking, "How is the tornado wind different from the other wind?" Show the picture of the tornado and explain how the wind is blowing very hard. Use your body to demonstrate how the tornado turns around and around. Some children may want to be a tornado with you. Tell the children that there are people who have the job of watching the wind and the weather and tell us when the wind is going to be a tornado. People know when a tornado is coming and what to do so they will be safe.

Science

MATERIALS: two empty 2-liter soda bottles, enough water to fill one bottle 3/4 full, funnel, "tornado tube," picture of the tornado, crayons, paper

PROCEDURE: This activity is a follow-up to the previous group discussion on tornados. Show the children the picture of the tornado and review how the tornado moves. Ask the children if they can make their crayon move on the paper like a tornado. Tell the children they are going to make water move like a tornado, using the items on the table. Allow the children to identify the items and pour the water into one soda bottle, filling it about 3/4 full. Attach the bottle using the tornado tube.

Instruct one child to turn over the water-filled bottle so that the water runs down into the bottle below. Discuss the children's observations, as each gets a turn to flip the bottle.

TORNADO TUBE

To purchase TORNADO TUBE write for catalog:

Insect Lore Products
P.O. Box 1535
Shafter, CA 93263
Phone (1-800-LIVE-BUG)

Science

MATERIALS: small fan with high, medium and low speed, objects of various weights, such as wooden block, styrofoam cup, small plastic toy, paper (provide an assortment of objects, some of which can be moved by the air from the fan and others which will not)

PROCEDURE: This activity is a follow-up to the previous group discussion on tornados. Review with the children the good things the wind can do (i.e., sail a boat, dry clothes, fly a kite, etc.). Have them recall what the difference is between this wind and a tornado (i.e., a tornado is much stronger). Help each child select an item and predict what will happen when the fan is turned on. Experiment by varying the distance between the items and the fan and changing the speed of the fan. Discuss and possibly record the children's observations.

Art

MATERIALS: styrofoam egg carton sections, toothpicks, 3" construction paper triangles, 12 x 18" construction paper, crepe paper streamers, crayons, string

PROCEDURE: During free play period, offer to help the children make a kite or a sail boat. Show the pictures of each and talk about how the sailboats are alike and different. Do the same for the kite pictures.

To make the sailboat, have the children color a construction paper triangle and use the toothpick to attach the triangle sail to the bottom of the egg carton section. They can try out their boat in the water table by blowing through a straw to make the boat sail.

For the kite, the children can use their own ideas to construct an original kite from the large construction paper.

Curriculum Areas
Science

(NEWS OF A VOLCANO)

MATERIALS: clay or play dough, styrofoam cups, styrofoam meat trays, vinegar, baking soda, spoons, measuring cup, pictures of volcanos

PROCEDURE: (You may want to brush up on your own knowledge about volcanos before presenting this activity to the children.) Arrange the above items on a table. Show the volcano pictures to a small group of children and talk about what they see. Explain that volcanos are very far away (unless it is not true!); they don't move, and there will not be any new ones near their homes. Reassure the children that adults also watch volcanos carefully, and know when one is going to erupt so people can move to a safe place. Tell the group that they are going to make a small volcano.

Ask the group, "What is on the table that can be used to hold the lava (the cup)? What can we use to make a mountain?" Help the children to mold the clay around the cup. Next, help each child to pour 1/2 cup of vinegar into their cup. Allow each child to mix one tablespoon of baking soda into their vinegar, and watch the volcanos erupt! Discuss the children's comments and observations.

Art

MATERIALS: food color, white Karo syrup, high-gloss (fingerpaint) paper, brown construction paper, scissors, pictures of volcanos, glue

PROCEDURE: This activity is designed as a follow-up to the volcano science activity. Show the pictures of the volcanos to a small group of children and review the science experiment. Ask the children to cut out a mountain from their construction paper and glue it to a piece of the high-gloss paper. Help the children to identify the syrup and food color. Let them feel and taste the syrup and describe the texture and flavor.

Tell the group, "We are going to use the syrup and food color to make pretend lava coming out of the mountain." Ask each child what color lava they want to make. Pour a small amount of karo above their mountain and put a drop of food color on the syrup. Allow the children to use their fingers to move the lava down the mountain.

Curriculum Areas
Language Arts

(NEWS OF A FLOOD)

MATERIALS: large paper, marker

PROCEDURE: This activity is designed to be used when there is a public request for donations to aid victims of a flood. During a group time, ask the children to tell you

what they have heard or seen on television about the flood. Tell them that the center is going to send some things to needy persons and ask the children what they think people may need. (Usually, a public request for donations includes an indication of what is needed. You may want to share this information with the children.) On the large paper make a list of what the center could send. Follow this discussion with the table activity below.

MATERIALS: magazine pictures of the list of items from the group time discussion (above), glue, a large box to hold donations

Art

PROCEDURE: Cut out magazine pictures of the children's list of suggestions generated during the group time discussion. Help the children to glue the pictures on the box. Send a notice home to parents requesting donations, to be placed in the box. If possible, take the children to drop off the boxed items at the designated community spot.

MATERIALS: large cups to pour large amounts of water, small toys to be used as houses and cars

Natural Materials

PROCEDURES: As a follow-up to the discussion about floods in the activities above, make these items available in the sand table. Assign a teacher to help the children make streams which overflow and wash items away.

(NEWS OF AN EARTHQUAKE)

Curriculum Areas
Science, Language Arts

MATERIALS: large drum, rice, Legos, wooden blocks

PROCEDURE: At a group time, discuss the news reports of the earthquake with the children. Clarify their misperceptions and assure them of their own safety. Use the drum to show how vibrations can make things move. Allow the children to make predictions about what will happen when they place different items on the drum. Discuss their observations: Was it harder to make the rice move or the wooden block? Why? At the end of group time, place the drum and additional items at a table to be experimented with during free play period.

SEPARATION AND/OR DIVORCE

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

Children are very sensitive to emotional undercurrents in the adults around them. Even if there have been no overt signs of problems, they are very likely to know that something is wrong. This situation creates feelings of confusion and anxiety, often magnified by parents' inability or unwillingness to discuss the family problems.

When the family does break up, children experience a great deal of loss. Their confusion and anxiety may increase, due to the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of new living arrangements. Children also experience deep grief, for the missing parent, and for the intact family lifestyle. In many cases, too, children feel responsible for, and guilty about, the breakup of their parents' marriage.

In some cases, an underlying sense of relief adds to the confusion, if the family situation was overtly stressful, or if the separation or divorce was caused by an abusive or emotionally disturbed partner.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Children's insecurity at this trying time causes many behavioral changes. They may suffer extreme separation anxiety, fearing they will lose their remaining parent in addition to the one who is no longer living with them. There may be signs of regression to infantile behavior, such as toileting accidents or greater need of a security object. They may have difficulty falling asleep or have sleep disturbances.

Children who feel guilty about the marital breakup may attempt to behave "perfectly," fantasizing that if they are good enough, their parents will resolve their difficulties, and the family will reunite.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- what the child has been told about the family situation
- what living arrangements are being made for the child
- how all members involved (parents, siblings, and the child) are handling the situation

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what are normal reactions for preschoolers in this situation
- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- staff plans to ease the child's adjustment to the changes in his life
- the importance of explaining what is happening and what is likely to occur

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Sometimes grownups who are married find that they can't live together any more. But they still love their children."
- "Grownups sometimes stop loving each other, but they never stop loving their children; it's a different kind of love."
- "I bet you miss seeing your [daddy] every day. What kinds of things do you do when you're together?"
- "It's not a child's fault when grownups get a divorce. It's a grownup problem. You didn't do something bad to cause your mom and dad's problems."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- continued stability and consistency in the school program
- reassurance that even when parents are apart, they still care for and love their children
- a trusted adult for comfort as needed
- tolerance for regressive or emotional behavior

Classroom Activity/ Experiences

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide concrete experiences that will help the child clarify his feelings, and the accuracy of his perceptions

Curriculum Areas

Language Arts

MATERIALS: birds and nest patterns (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources"), construction paper, scissors, paste, crayons,

PROCEDURE: In preparation, make copies of the patterns from the end of this chapter, and cut them out. This activity should be done at a table with the child in a one-on-one setting. One or two other children may be included if it seems appropriate. Ask the child to select one mother and one father bird, and help him paste each into a nest. Then, help the child paste each nest onto a separate piece of construction paper. Allow the child to select as many baby birds as he wants and to color them or decorate them in some way. Now, say, "Which nest will the baby birds be in first: the mommy's or the daddy's?" Place the babies in the chosen nest and ask the child to tell you what they will do together. Record his answers on the paper. Repeat with the second parent bird. If the child is able, discuss how these drawings relate to his experience.

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: Family dollhouse, dolls to represent child's family, toy cars for the dolls to ride in

PROCEDURE: Make the family dollhouse available for free play choice. Allow the

child to set up two separate homes, and help him dramatize his unique family arrangement. Use the cars to simulate the transitions from house to house and from home to day care.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: glue, flannel, cardboard, yarn, pattern of child's family members (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources"), magazine pictures which represent the following activities (two of each): meal times, bedtime, play time, shopping, getting dressed, bath time

PROCEDURE: Mount the activity pictures and the child's paper family members onto the cardboard, and back with flannel. Find a time when you can spend a few quiet individual minutes with the child and tell him that you want to make some pictures with him about the way he is living now. Help the child make a yarn outline of a house on each side of the flannel board (this may look like a circle, square or other abstract shape). Label the houses: Mommy's House and Daddy's House. Have the child place the paper mother into one house and the paper father into the other house. Then ask him to look at the pictures and sort them into the two houses. Discuss his choices as he makes them; for example, as the child selects a picture of a mealtime and places it into the Mommy's house, ask him if they also have mealtime with Daddy. Help him find the other mealtime picture and place it into the Daddy house. Continue until all the pictures are sorted, helping the child to recognize how both parents care for his needs.

Language Arts

PROCEDURE: Below are some ideas for helping the child constructively and safely express his angry feelings:

make angry pictures	pound clay
write angry words	make angry music
hammer nails into scrap wood	twist a wire

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

The success or failure of a shared-custody arrangement depends a great deal upon the behavior of the adults in the child's life. The frequent changes associated with this life style can create a great deal of uncertainty and confusion for a young child. Feelings of dislocation and disassociation are common, as are reactions of fearfulness and anxiety.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

A child in a shared-custody situation that involves frequent changes of home and primary caregiver may react strongly in the classroom. They may be resistant to changes in routine, or even to familiar changes within the established routine. Regressive behavior may involve excessive crying or clinging, toileting accidents, worried questioning, and other demands for attention. An increase in anger or hostility may also be attributed to the disruptive life style.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- schedule of custody
- precise information about transfer from one parent to the other: timing, rules, procedure, possessions, etc.
- accurate information about anyone who may be picking up the child
- established emergency procedures
- explanations the child has received
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- brief, comprehensive, daily report of child's behavior
- gentle pressure to maintain consistency; information about the importance of this to the child
- suggestions about resources: books, workshops, support groups

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "I'll bet you're feeling..."
- "It must be hard to be missing..."
- "Today your [mother] is picking you up. She always comes right after [snack time]."
- "Children who are feeling [like that] sometimes can't concentrate very well

on things they know how to do. When you're more comfortable, you will stop [wetting your pants]."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- be sure to provide a special, consistent place for the child's belongings
- promise and plan for providing extra attention, especially at identified difficult periods
- thoughtful planning about explaining child's reactions to the rest of the group
- allowance for regressive behavior, with gentle expectation of eventual improvement
- equal support for both parents, especially when talking to the child

Classroom Activity/ Experience:

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide experiences of coming and going that are under the child's control.

Curriculum Areas

Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: Family doll house, dolls to represent child's family, toy cars for the dolls to ride in

PROCEDURE: Make the family doll house available for free play choice. Allow the child to set up two separate homes, and help her dramatize his unique family arrangement. Use the cars to simulate the transitions from house to house, and from home to day care.

Science, Language Arts

MATERIALS: empty paper towel rolls (one per child), small toy cars (at least two different models)

PROCEDURE: Allow the children to use the props freely. When appropriate, introduce this game: Have the child select two different cars. The caregiver closes her eyes while the child picks a car, places it in the tube, and hides the other car. The caregiver opens her eyes and tries to guess which car will come down the tube. The child inclines the tube and allows the car to roll out.

Art

MATERIALS: a large sheet of paper (at least 20" long), popsicle sticks, magazine pictures of family members: fathers, mothers, grandparents, siblings, etc. (see Activity Patterns in "Adult Resources"), paste, crayons, pre-cut construction paper shapes

PROCEDURE: Suggest to the child who is living in two homes that she make a picture of each house, using the crayons and paper shapes. The child may also make a picture of the child care center, or other important buildings, especially if they are

used as a transition point. Ask the child to depict her family, using the available pictures (or additional drawings). Glue or paste the pictures onto the popsicle sticks, giving each a "handle." Cut a slit in the paper, below the buildings, and insert the stick "puppets." Act out the child's family routine by moving the puppets back and forth between the buildings.

Physical

MATERIALS: large ball, optional symbols such as pre-cut numbers, letters, or shapes, tape

PROCEDURE: The children and the teacher sit in a large circle. One child (preferably the targeted child) stands in the middle of the circle and chants, "I roll the ball to (child's name), he rolls it back to me." Variations include throwing or bouncing the ball, and identifying the children by the color of their clothing, or by symbols such as shapes, numbers, or letters taped to their shirts.

A TEACHER LEAVES THE CENTER

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child whose teacher is leaving the center is likely to feel anxious about the change, and this anxiety may spill over into other aspects of her life. She may fear the loss of additional significant others, such as parents, siblings, friends, and other teachers. She may harbor the guilty feeling that somehow she is responsible for the teacher leaving. The child may also worry about her safety when the person upon whom she relied is gone.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

A child who is experiencing anxiety may exhibit this in a variety of ways. She may become more clingy and have difficulty in separation situations. She may be irritable. She may have difficulty getting along with the other children in the center. She may withdraw and refuse to talk about her fears, especially if she is feeling guilty.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing at home
- their own reaction to the teacher leaving
- how they are handling the child's reaction and behavior

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- facts about the teacher's departure
- information about the teacher's replacement
- reminder that the child will need extra reassurance during this change in personnel

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "Ms. Jones is leaving because _____. She will miss us as much as we will miss her."
- "Ms. Baker will be your new teacher. She will do the same kinds of things you did with Ms. Jones."
- "The rest of the boys and girls will still be in your class, and the rest of the teachers will still be here."
- "All of the teachers, new and old, will take good care of you."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- keep all other routine and personnel changes to a minimum

- availability of adult reassurances about the children's safety and care
- preparation of the children for the teacher's departure a week or so in advance

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to help the child express feelings and concerns about the change in caregiving staff and to provide reassurance about her continued care.

Classroom Activity/ Experience:

Curriculum Areas

Art

MATERIALS: light colored paint, paper, black fine tip marker, page from a wall paper sample book, cardboard

PROCEDURE: Assist each child in putting her hand print onto the paper. Ask the child to tell you about one fond memory shared with the teacher who is leaving. Write the message inside the handprint and allow the child to sign her name. Mount the handprints on the cardboard and use the wall paper sample to make a frame.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: recipe file and blank recipe cards

PROCEDURE: During a group time tell the children that the class is going to give a gift to the teacher who is leaving. Explain what a recipe file is and show the children the file and blank cards. Tell the children that they will get a card to take home. They can help their parent(s) select a favorite recipe, copy it onto the card, fill it out and bring it back to school. The children can help wrap the gift and present it to the teacher.

Language Arts

MATERIALS: photographs of the teacher who is leaving interacting with the children, calendar

PROCEDURE: At a group time, have the teacher who is leaving tell the children where she will be going and when. She can mark the calendar to indicate this. Then, pass around the photos and talk with the children about all the good times they have shared. Take the opportunity to share feelings (children and adults). The departing teacher can also reassure the children that the other teachers will still be at the center to take care of them. She can write down her address and leave it for the children and the other teachers.

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Unit 3: TRAUMATIC LOSS

CHAPTER 1: BECOMING A STEP FAMILY

Boyd, Lizi. (1987). *The Not-So-Wicked Stepmother.* New York: Viking.

Christiansen, C.B. (1989). *My Mother's House, My Father's House.* New York: Puffin.

Drescher, Joan. (1980). *Your Family, My Family.* New York: Walker.

Noble, June. (1981). *Where Do I Fit In?* New York: Holt.

Stenson, Janet. (1979). *Now I Have a Stepparent and It's Kind of Confusing.* New York: Avon.

CHAPTER 2: EXPOSURE TO TV VIOLENCE OR SCARY PROGRAMS

Anderson, Lonzo. (1974). *The Day the Hurricane Happened.* New York: Scribner.

Branley, Franklyn. (1985). *Hurricane Watch.* New York: Crowell.

Branley, Franklyn. (1988). *Tornado.* New York: Crowell.

Szilagyi, Mary. (1985). *Thunderstorm.* New York: Bradbury.

CHAPTER 3: GOING TO THE HOSPITAL

Roger, Fred. (1988). *Going To the Hospital; Wearing a Cast; Having an Operation. (Booklets for children).* (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).

Stein, Sara. (1974). *A Hospital Story: An Open Family Book for Parents and Children Together.* New York: Walker.

Wolf, Angelika. (1969). *Mom! I Broke My Arm.* Batavia, IL: Lion.

CHAPTER 4: HOSPITALIZATION OF A FAMILY MEMBER

Sharmat, Marjorie. (1974). *I Want Mama.* New York: Harper.

Stein, Sara. (1974). *A Hospital Story: An Open Family Book for Parents and Children Together.* New York: Walker.

CHAPTER 5: LOSS OF PROPERTY

Chorao, Kay. (1978). *Molly's Moe.* New York: Seabury.

Freeman, Don. (1980). *A Pocket for Corduroy.* New York: Puffin.

Havill, Juanita. (1986). *Jamaica's Find.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Obligado, Lillian. (1962). *Sad Day, Glad Day.* New York: Holiday House.

Oxenbury, Helen. (1989). *Pippo Gets Lost.* New York: Aladdin.

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. (1977). *I Don't Care.* New York: MacMillan.

CHAPTER 6: NEWS REPORTS OF A DISASTER

Zolotow, Charlotte. (1952). *The Storm Book.* New York: Harper.
(See also Unit 3, Chapter 2)

CHAPTER 7: SEPARATION AND/OR DIVORCE

Brown, Laurene and Brown, Marc. (1986). *Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Perry, Patricia and Lynch, Marietta. (1985). *Mommy and Daddy are Divorced.* New York: Dial.

Sharmat, Marjorie. (1974). *I Want Mama.* New York: Harper.

Vigna, Judith. (1984). *Grandma Without Me.* Niles, IL: Whitman.

Watson, Jane and Switzer, Robert. (1988). *Sometimes a Family Has to Split Up.* New York: Crow

Zolotow, Charlotte. (1971). *A Father Like That.* New York: Harper.

CHAPTER 8: SHARED CUSTODY

Baum, Louis. (1986). *One More Time.* New York: Morrow.

Caines, Jeannette. (1977). *Daddy.* New York: Harper.

Hazen, Barbara. (1978). *Two Homes to Live In.* New York: Human Sciences Press.

Schuhman, Joan. (1979). *Two Places to Sleep.* Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

CHAPTER 9: A TEACHER LEAVES THE CENTER

(See Chapter 1, Unit 6)

CATASTROPHIC LOSS

UNIT 4

Chapters

1. Death as a Family Member
2. Loss Due to Fire

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Unit IV: Catastrophic Loss

In every classroom there are bound to be children whose losses are so intense that teacher support and professional intervention will be needed. In the modern world, caregivers are all-too-often expected to help children who have experienced the death of a parent, the fear and chaos associated with a massive drug sweep through the neighborhood, the jailing of a parent, or the more personal violations of an armed robbery or a natural disaster. In these situations, teachers can help children begin to gain a sense of control over the situation by naming the feelings and organizing the information. For many children, the experiences are so emotionally charged that they cannot sort out what in fact actually happened. Allowing them to recall the event and clarifying the information, will make them feel more in control of the situation.

Additionally, adults must help children find acceptable avenues for expressing the rage and hostility associated with events such as these. There is bound to be an overwhelming sense of anger or fear about such serious losses. Avenues for expression of these feelings might include providing play dough or clay to pound and pummel, making sure that easel painting is available daily for children to non-verbally express their feelings, and providing opportunities to sit on an adult's lap, either in silence or to talk about what has been happening.

Providing play activities that allow children to play out their fears gives children the opportunity to recast the experiences in a new light and master the anxieties associated with the situation. For instance, children can re-enact the episode, either playing it out exactly and overcoming the fears, or changing the course of the play and creating new events over which they feel they have more control. Adult-child interactions that include informal conversations help children begin to name their fears and organize their experience, making the event more understandable and ultimately more manageable for them.

In these situations, it is imperative that adults realize the need for additional information and assistance. With outside professional support, adults can continue to help children through these difficult times, responding appropriately to the catastrophic event.

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child may encounter death in many of his daily experiences, but none as poignant as the death of a family member or one who has had a very close relationship with the child. After the loss of a major relationship in a child's life, of someone who has shown love and kindness, the child may feel the emptiness of his world. Feelings of anger, confusion, desertion, and insecurity may confront her. In addition, she is almost certain to feel responsible, and guilty, about the loss she has experienced.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

Some children will display no behavior changes at all, at least initially. It is important to recognize this as, in fact, an extreme reaction, that of denial. When these defenses begin to soften, children will most often begin to seem sad or angry. Antisocial behavior may also appear, taking the form of withdrawal (from friends, from play, from eating), belligerence, nervousness, or just emotional unpredictability. Regression and sleep disturbances are also fairly common.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- the circumstances of the family member's death
- the nature of the child's relationship with the deceased family member
- what the child knows, and has been told, about the death
- other changes (such as in home routine) as a result of the death
- what the child is saying and doing at home

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- normal reactions for preschoolers in this situation
- what the child is saying and doing in the classroom
- ways staff plans to help the child
- community resources that are available to assist the child and his family
- empathy for the parents' own grief, and ways that might affect their availability to their child

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "At one time or another, death—of a family member or a friend or a pet—happens to everyone, not just to you."
- "You are young, your parents are young; you and they will be living for a long, long time."

- "I think you might be really missing your [family member] today; we can talk about it, if you'd like."
- "We're all sad that your [family member] has died. We will help each other, and we will take good care of you."
- "Children sometimes feel like it's their fault when someone they love dies. Grownups try to help them understand that it's not."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- continued classroom stability and consistency
- tolerance for regressive or emotional behavior
- special time to be spent with the child, one on one, talking freely and answering questions
- openness with the whole group, and alertness for "secondary" reactions among the other children

Classroom Activity/ Experience

PURPOSE: These activities are designed to provide the child with an opportunity to discuss the feelings and concerns about death that are aroused when one experiences the loss of a family member and to support the child through the grieving process.

Curriculum Areas

Art, Dramatic Play

MATERIALS: play dough, paint, assorted collage material, crayons and paper, an equipped housekeeping area

PROCEDURE: Children can experience success with the above materials, which will reinforce their sense of mastery and control. Offer individualized materials that help the child symbolize his or her own personal experience.

Music

MATERIALS: various musical instruments, pictures portraying emotions (sad, mad, happy, etc.)

PROCEDURE: Introduce the activity to a small group at music time by reviewing the pictures with the children, identifying the emotions depicted. Then ask the children to tell you what makes them feel happy, sad, or mad. Discuss the behavior that each emotion produces, asking the children for examples of their own actions, and those of adults they have observed. When the discussion reaches a comfortable stopping place, introduce the idea of a "Feeling Parade," and describe the following activity:

Turn the pictures face down and ask a child to select one and identify the emotion. Then ask the child to select an instrument and play music that represents the picture. Discuss concepts such as tempo and volume, and how these might relate to the

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pictured feeling. Then, help the remaining children select instruments and have a "Feeling Parade" around the room. Repeat the procedure as many times as the children want, with different pictures, feelings, and instruments.

Art

MATERIALS: white paper, crayons, and/or markers

PROCEDURE: Set aside a special time for a one-on-one activity with the child who has experienced the loss. Explain to the child your understanding of her situation and your guesses about her feelings. Tell her that you have an idea for a project that might help her start to feel better. Ask the child to draw a picture of herself in the middle of the paper. Then, ask her to draw all of the people that care for her (she may need some gentle assistance with this part of the activity). Use the completed drawing to confirm the child's connections to supportive family and friends, and point out that there are many people who love her and will take care of her. Using the information you have about the child's specific situation, invite her to tell you her perception of what happened: "I wonder what you are feeling/ thinking about what happened?" Use this opportunity to clear up any misperceptions the child may have about the death (e.g., it was not her fault, people who die do not come back, death is not contagious, her feelings are normal, this is the way people feel when someone they love dies, etc.).

Science

MATERIALS: pictures of trees during different seasons (check the picture file at your local library)

PROCEDURE: At a group time, or with a small group during free-play time, ask the children to select a tree picture and identify one characteristic of the tree: flowers in spring, leaves in summer, color of leaves in autumn, snow covered trees in winter, etc. Help the children sequence the tree pictures and identify each season. Point out how in the autumn the leaves die, but in the spring new ones grow. Questions: How is this different from the death of the tree itself? Of an animal? A person? What happens to the leaves after they die?

LOSS DUE TO FIRE

Feelings and Behavior

The feelings of a child under these circumstances:

A child whose family home has been destroyed by fire has feelings of great vulnerability. She will be dealing with a host of reality-based fears: what will happen to the family, where will they now live, how will their belongings be replaced? Fantasy-based fears concerning the fire's awesome destructive power are also a concern. In addition, the child may be feeling guilty about her real or imagined responsibility for the disaster.

The behavior of a child under these circumstances:

A child may have difficulty sleeping, imagining that another fire will occur while she sleeps. She may cling to favorite caregivers, need the comfort of a transition object, or regress in other ways. The child may resist separating from her parents or other significant adults, partly out of fear that they may come to harm while they are away from her. Guilt feelings may make her withdraw from contact with other children and adults. If she was in some way responsible for the fire, her feelings of self worth may be severely damaged, by her own thoughts and by comments from others.

Parent-Staff Communication

Information you might want from the child's parents:

- the circumstances of the fire and the degree of the child's involvement
- what the child knows about the fire
- what the child is saying and doing at home
- changes in living arrangements if the home was destroyed or needs repair

Information you might want to give the child's parents:

- community resources that are available to assist the family
- how the child is handling the event at school
- ways to help the child deal with the situation

In the Classroom

Some specific phrases caregiving staff members might use:

- "How scary it must have been when there was a fire at your house. I am glad all your family is safe."
- "I can understand if you are angry because your toys are gone. We have lots of things here that you like to play with."
- "When you want to talk about how you feel, I am ready to listen."

Special considerations within the normal classroom routine:

- provisions for enhancing the child's feeling of safety, e.g., point out the smoke detector and explain its use, instruct the child how to use the 911

telephone service, talk about fire safety rules, etc.

- reassurance that adults will continue to care for the child and keep her safe, awake and asleep
- encouragement to talk about her fears and feelings, so that grownups can help her deal with them
- arranging a special day for the children to bring in a very small toy of their own to share with the child who lost her toys.

Purpose: This activity is designed with two objectives in mind: to begin the process of replacing the child's possessions, and more importantly, to help her regain the feeling that she will be taken care of by the people who are a part of her life.

Classroom Activity/ Experience

Curriculum Areas

Art

MATERIALS: T shirt large enough to fit the child as a nightshirt, acrylic paint in a variety of colors, trays, fabric markers, newspaper, iron, large sheet of newsprint, crayons and/or stickers

PROCEDURE: If the children are not aware that one of their classmates has experienced a loss due to a fire, take some time during a group time to bring up the subject and discuss it fully. Answer questions, and talk about the feelings of those involved. (This topic may be a favorite at group time for many days.) When the facts have been presented, ask the children to tell you about their fears; focus especially on night-time fears. Then ask the children for examples of some ways people have helped them be less afraid, such as the comfort that friendship can provide. Finally, say, "A friendship nightshirt might be comforting for someone who is scared at night. Today we are going to work on one for our friend _____, whose things got burned in the fire."

During free-play period, cover a table with newspaper. Pour acrylic paint into small trays. Place the T shirt on the table. Demonstrate to the children how to dip their hands into the paint and make handprints on the shirt. After letting the shirt dry overnight, iron it to set the paint. The children can write their names with fabric markers next to their handprints. They can decorate the newsprint with crayons or stickers to make wrapping paper. They can then wrap the gift and present it to the child who experienced the fire.

Unit 4: CATASTROPHIC LOSS

CHAPTER 1: DEATH OF A FAMILY MEMBER

Bartoli, Jennifer. (1975). *Nonna.* New York: Harvey House.

Clifton, Lucille. (1983). *Everett Anderson's Goodbye.* New York: Holt.

dePaola, Tomie. (1973). *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs.* NewYork: Putnam.

Fassler, Joan. (1983). *My Grandpa Died Today.* New York: Human Sciences Press.

Hickman, Martha. (1984). *Last Week My Brother Anthony Died.* Nashville, TN: Abingdon.

Little, Jean. (1985). *Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird.* New York: Viking.

Miles, Miska. (1971).*innie and the Old One.* Boston: Little, Brown.

Powell, E. Sandy. (1990). *Geranium Morning.* Minneapolis, MN: Carolrhoda Books.

So Much to Think About: When Someone You Care About Who Has Died. (1991). (An Activity Book for Children). (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburhg, PA 15213).

Stein, Sara. (1974). *About Dying: An Open Family Book for Parents and Children Together.* New York: Walker.

Stevens, Margaret. (1989). *When Grandpa Died.* Chicago: Children's Press.

Wilhelm, Hans. (1985). *I'll Always Love You.* New York: Scholastic.

Zolotow, Charlotte. (1971). *A Father Like That.* New York: Harper.

Zolotow, Charlotte. (1974). *My Grandson Lew.* New York: Harper.

CHAPTER 2: LOSS DUE TO FIRE

Shamat, Marjorie Weinman. (1977). *I Don't Care.* New York: MacMillan.

Wiliams, Vera. (1982). *A Chair for My Mother.* New York: Greenwillow.

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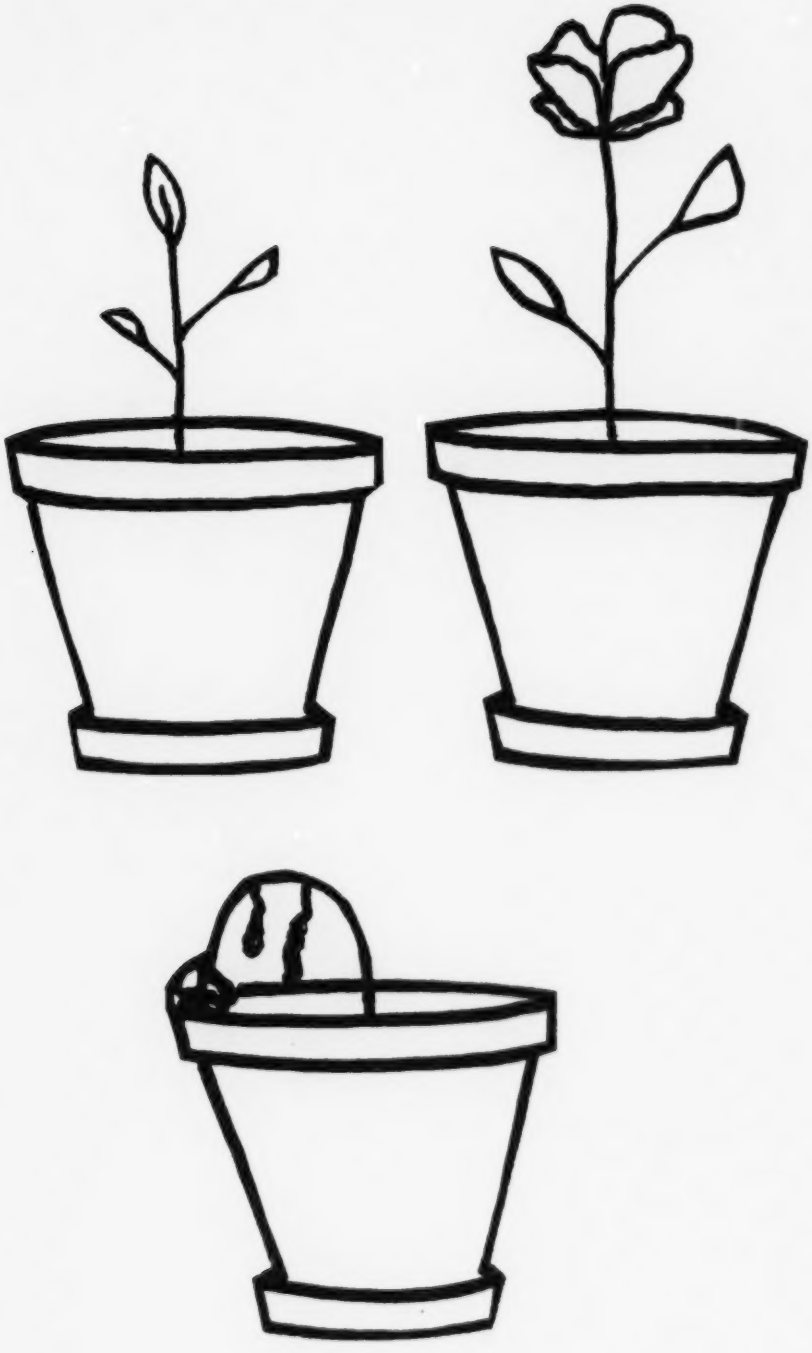

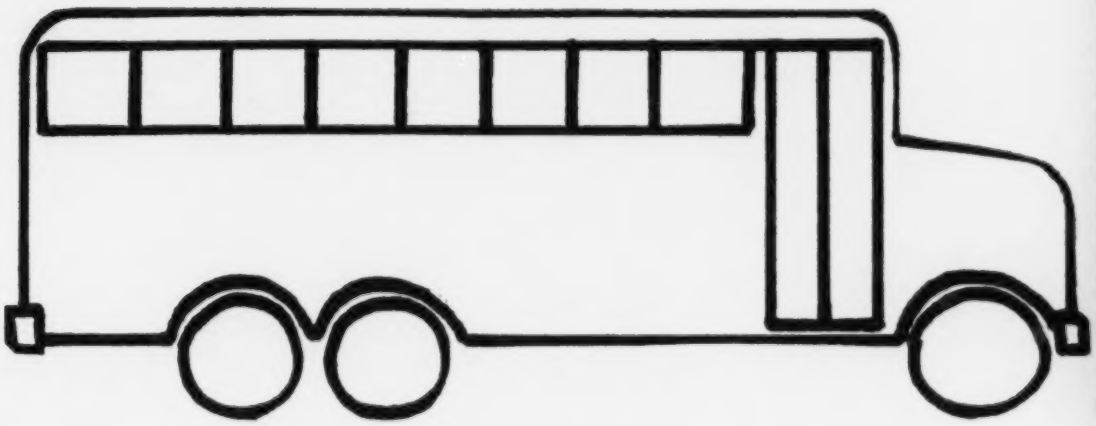

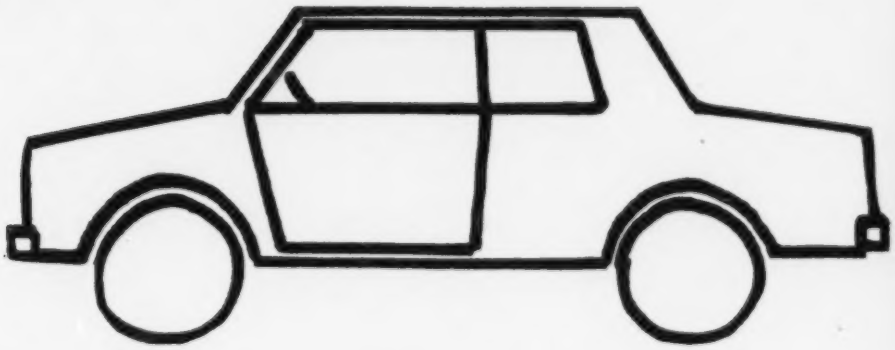

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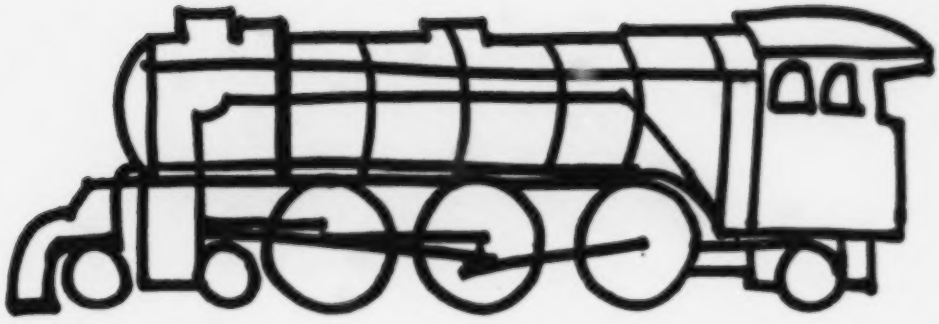

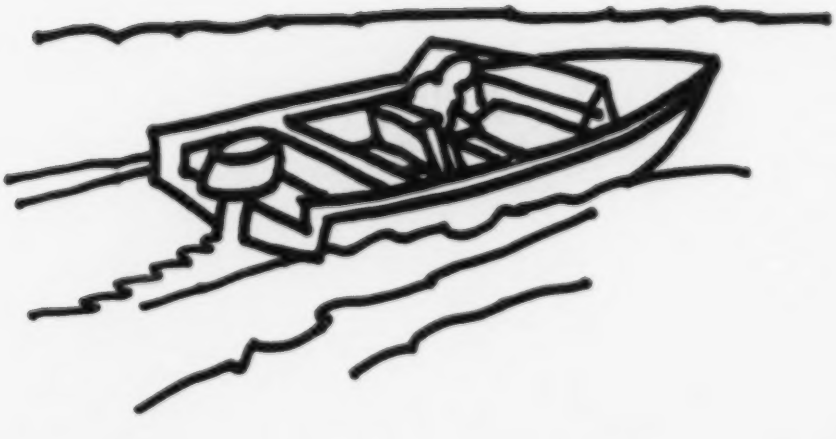

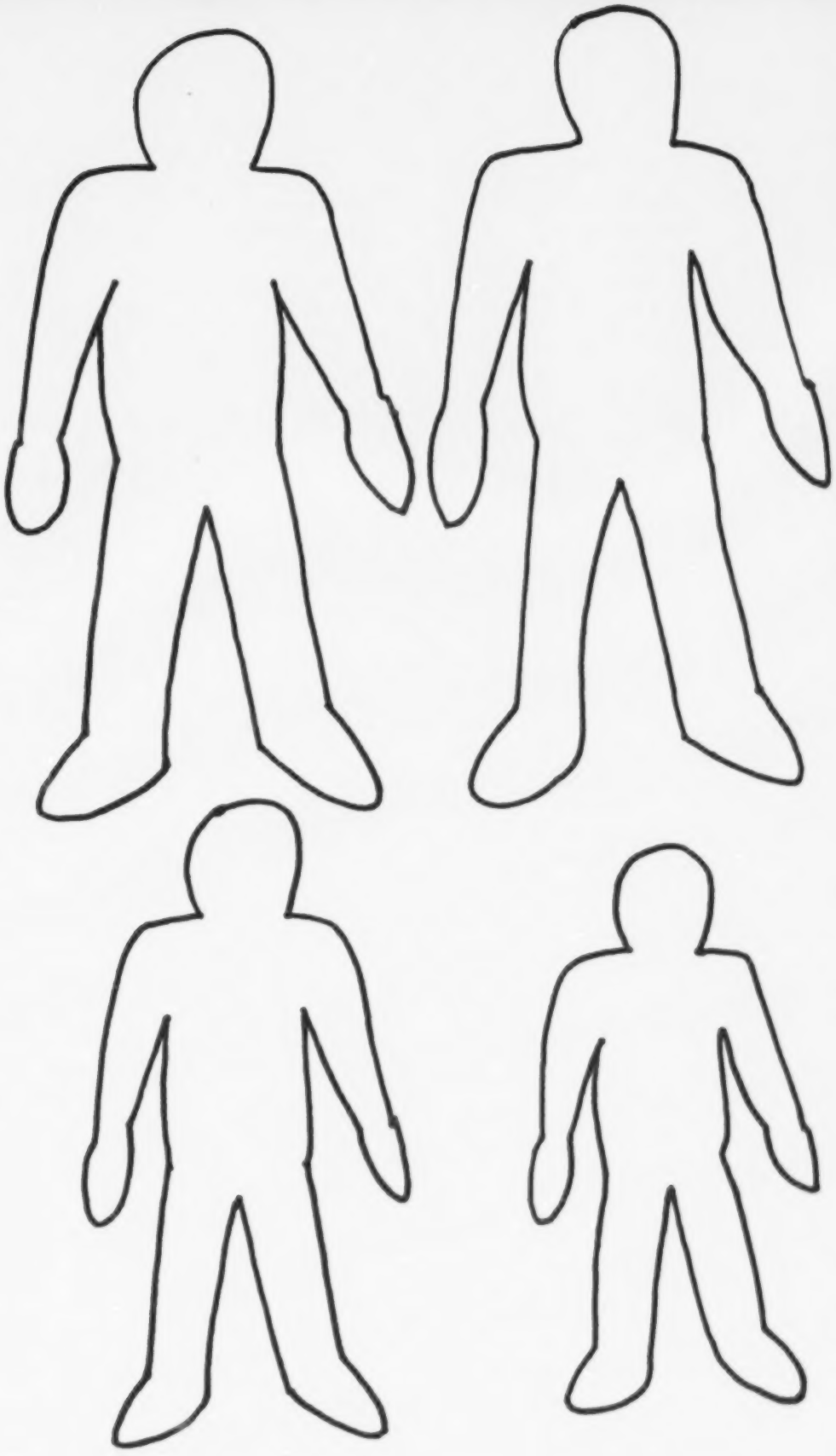

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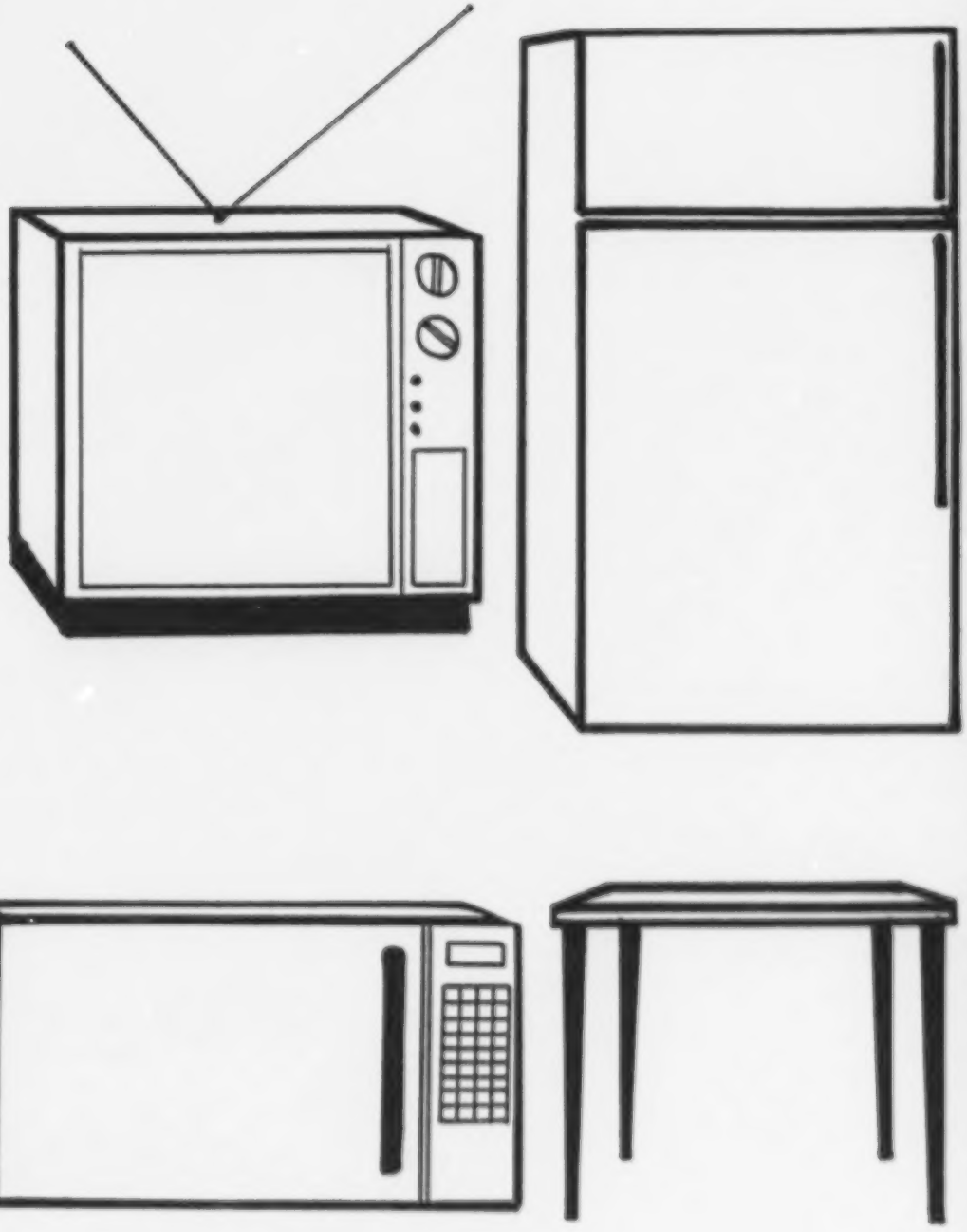

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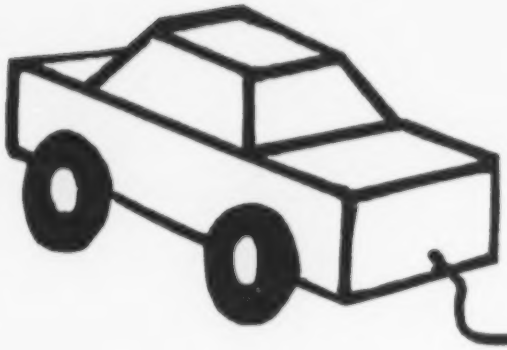

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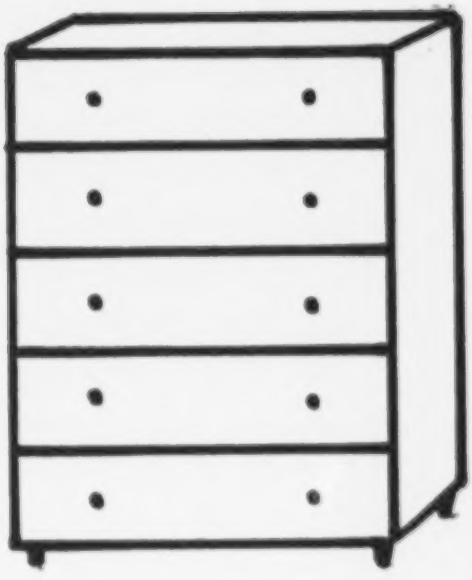

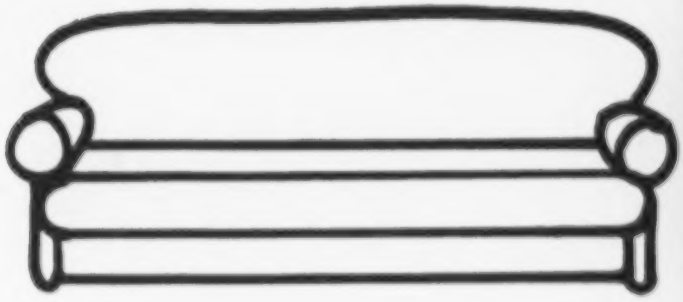

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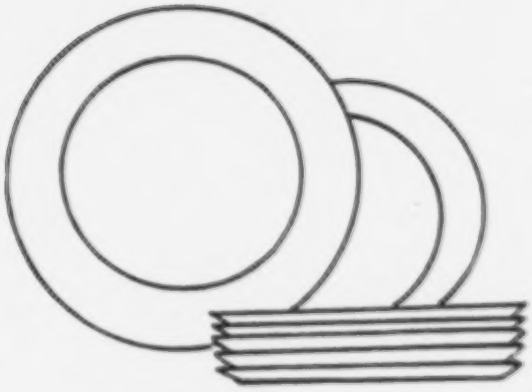

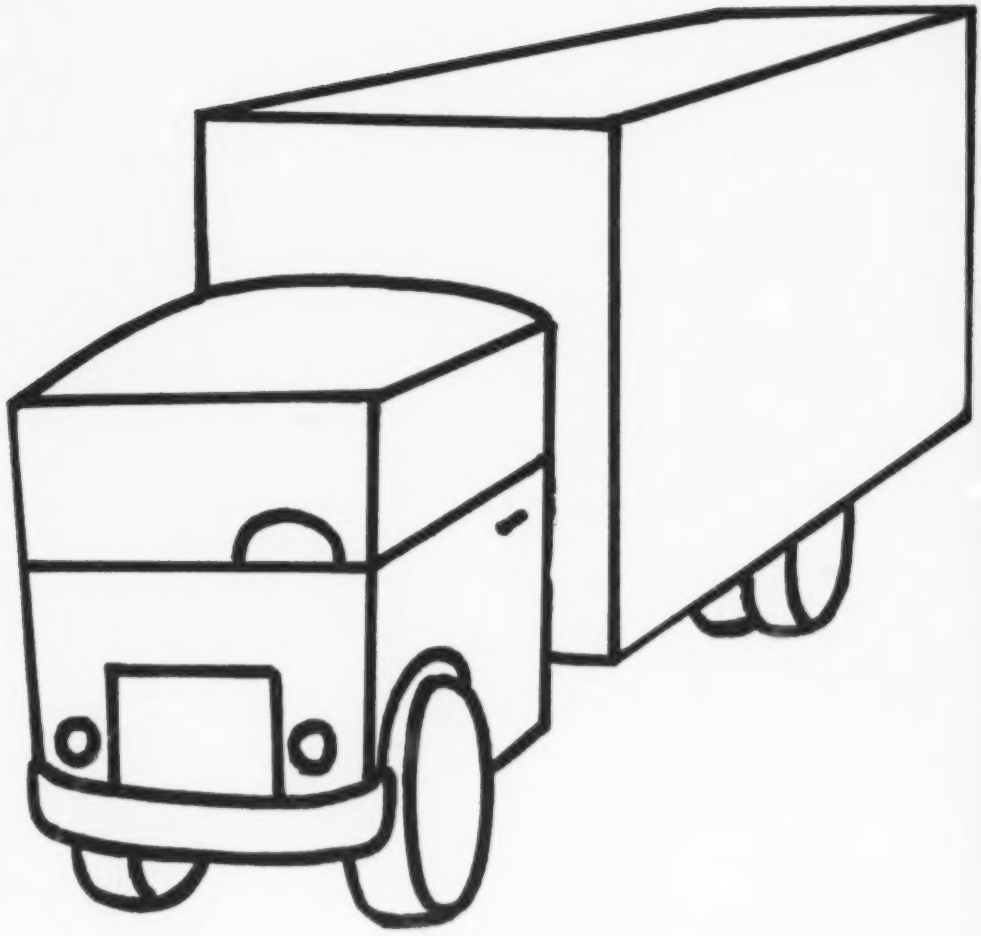

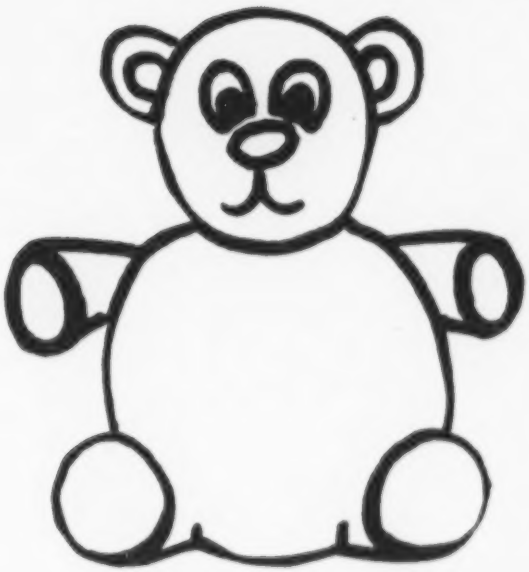

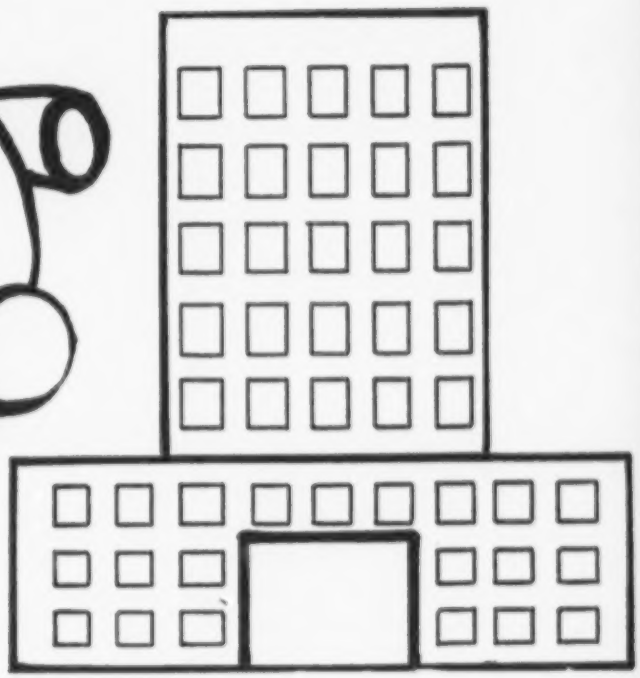

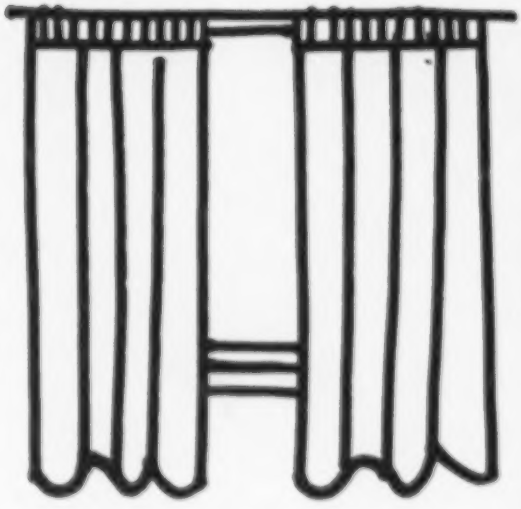

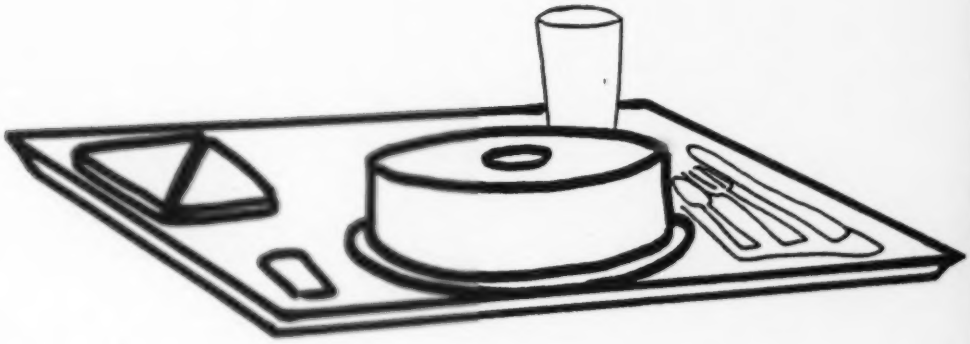

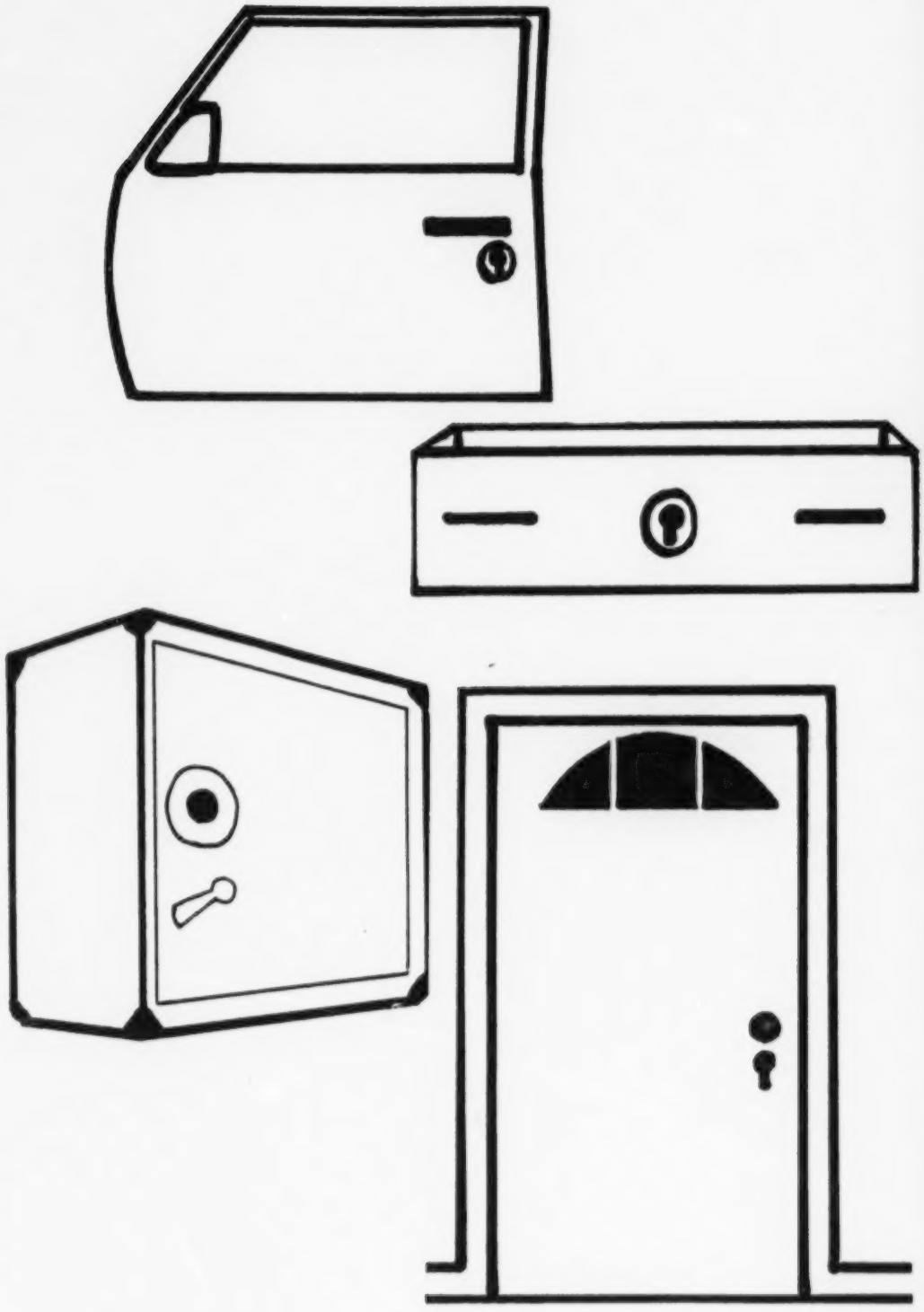

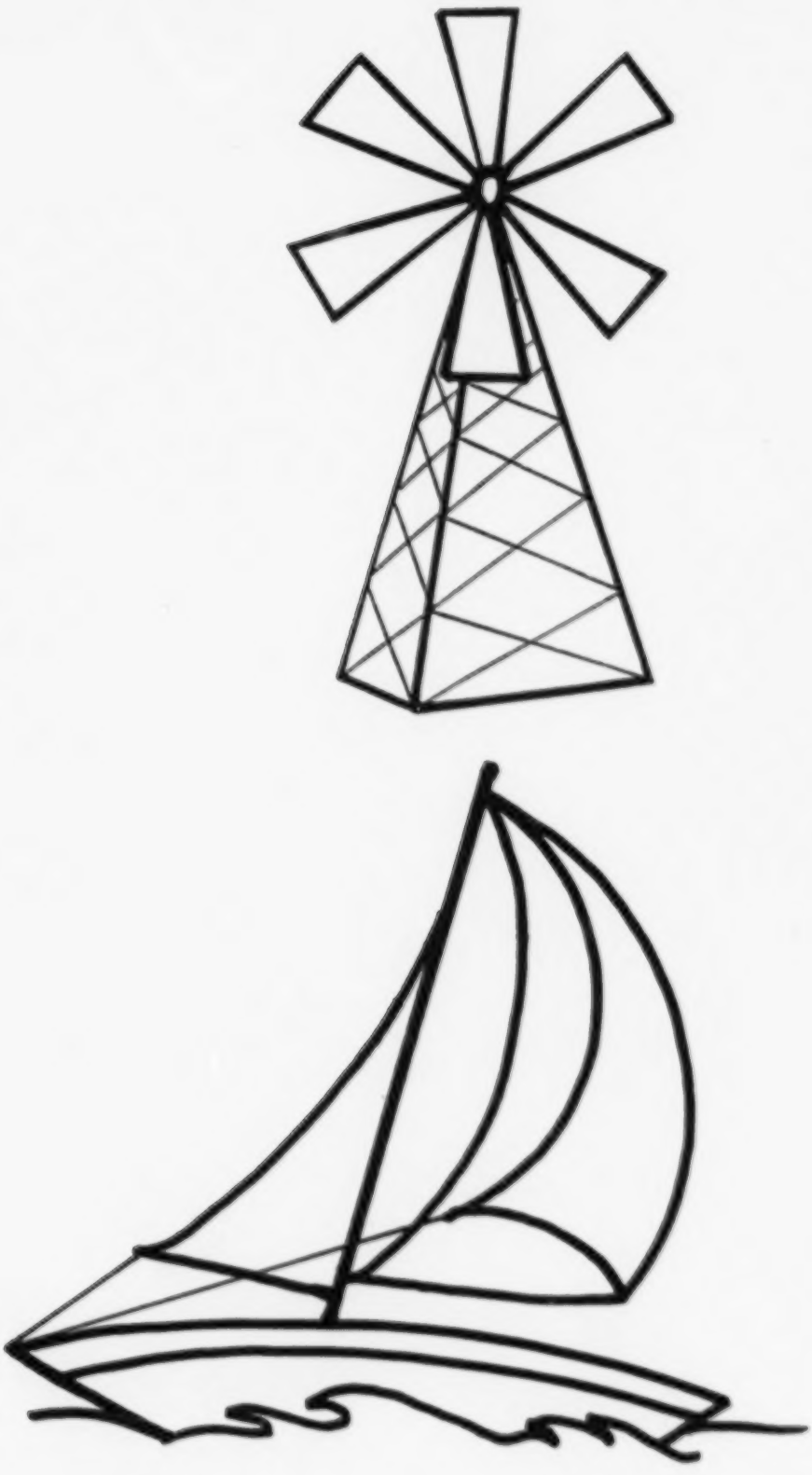

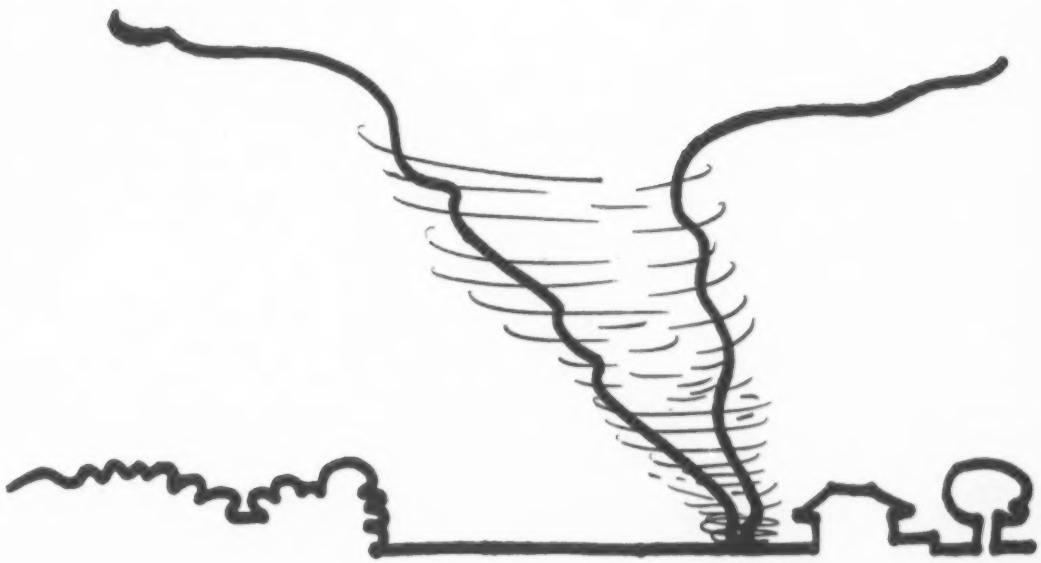

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VIDEOS

Children and the Grief Process. 1/2" VHS/20 minutes/1983. (Available from MTI Teleprograms, Inc. 108 Wilmot Road, Deerfield, IL 60015).

Can children be protected from death by not talking about it? In this film, Rabbi Carl Grollman discusses death and dying with a multi-age group of elementary school children. Although many of the children have had experiences with death, most have never had an opportunity to discuss their experiences. Many questions are raised, among them: the difference between real and make-believe death, feelings when someone dies, and allowing children to say "good-bye." Grollman recommends that both children and adults be educated concerning death. This informative film is recommended for parents, educators, and counselors. It would also be appropriate for students in elementary and junior high schools. The film is accompanied by a discussion guide.

Death of a Goldfish. 1/2" VHS/30 minutes. (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).

This classic Mister Rogers' Neighborhood program explores with children the difficult subject of death. It has been acclaimed for its sensitivity by child care professionals, educators, and parents. *Death of a Goldfish* can be shown to young children in schools, preschools, libraries, churches, and funeral homes. The presence of an adult who can help children deal with the feelings it may evoke is recommended.

Going to the Hospital. 1/2" VHS/20 minutes. (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213). A general introduction to the sights and sounds of a hospital and some of the feelings children may experience there. (English and Spanish)

Having an Operation. 1/2" VHS/20 minutes. (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213). A program only for children scheduled for simple surgery, helping them know what to expect. (English and Spanish)

Living with Death: Unfinished Business. 1/2" VHS/29 minutes/ 1983. (Available from MTI Teleprograms, Inc., 108 Walnut Road, Deerfield, IL 60015.)

Most people find it difficult to confront their feelings about death. In this film a leading authority, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, is interviewed concerning her research on the topic. Her non-traditional approach has helped many people to understand the emotional needs of the terminally ill and their families. She believes that the fear, regret, guilt, and anger of the dying and their families must be externalized before survivors can let go of the "unfinished business." She emphasizes that children should not be shielded from death. This excellent film is accompanied by a discussion guide. It would be appropriate for educators and counselors who work with students at any level from preschool through college.

Mister Rogers Talks with Parents. 1/2" VHS/43 minutes/1983. (Available from National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009-5786).

The video looks at some of the pressures on children today. It also takes you on a brief visit to "The Neighborhood."

Mister Rogers Talks with Parents About Competition. 1/2"VHS/60 minutes. (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).

Fred Rogers, Susan Stamberg, and psychologist Dr. Tom Cottle host this special

for adults about competition, sibling rivalry, and children.

Mister Rogers Talks with Parents About Divorce. 1/2" VHS/60 minutes. (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).
Susan Stamberg and author-counselor Dr. Earl Grollman join Fred Rogers and a studio audience to talk openly about the crisis of divorce.

Talking with Young Children About Death. 1/2" VHS/30 minutes. (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).
Fred Rogers and colleague Hedda Sharapan talk about how adults can help begin to understand death and cope with sadness. This program can be used as a resource for college-level courses, parenting and community groups, professional workshops, and religious institutions.

You (Parents!) are Special: Divorce. 1/2" VHS/10 minutes.
You (Parents!) are Special: Moving. 1/2" VHS/10 minutes.
(Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).
In short, 10-minute conversations with children and parents, Fred Rogers explores topics of concern to families. These videocassette programs are meant to be spring-boards for family or larger group discussions.

Wearing a Cast. 1/2" VHS/20 minutes. (Available from Family Communications Marketing Department, 4802 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213).
A program which shows how casts are applied and removed and how children can do many things for themselves even while wearing a cast. (English and Spanish)

When Children Grieve. 1/2" VHS/20 minutes/1987. (Available from Churchill Films, 662 North Robertson Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90069).
It's hard to tell children that a parent is dying. It's better to tell them, however, than to try and hide it. This video program emphasizes that children need support and must understand that the illness is not their fault. They should be allowed to express their fears, anger, and concerns. Children worry about their future when the ill parent finally dies. Will the other parent survive? Will the child survive? The school-age child of eight - ten years is better able to understand death than younger children, but all children need to know that their feelings of grief are necessary. This program would be appropriate for parents, teachers, and counselors of students from early childhood through the junior high school years.

When the Wind Stops. 1/2" VHS/11 Minutes/1987. (Available from Aims Media, 6910 Woodley Avenue, Van Nuys, CA 91406).
Featuring a book by Charlotte Zolotow, this presentation illustrates how books can help answer children's questions. After a fun-filled day, a little boy asks his mother, "Why does the day have to end?" His mother explains that the day doesn't really end, "It begins somewhere else." She answers other similar questions and shows him that the end of one thing is always the beginning of another. The information will be as reassuring to young viewers as it is to the child. Of interest to primary and intermediate students, the film is accompanied by a study guide.